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The family and the modernist novel : the treatment of the family in the works of Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf and Joyce.

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PHD THESIS

THE FAMILY AND THE MODERNIST NOVEL: THE
TREATMENT OF THE FAMILY IN THE WORKS OF
CONRAD, LAWRENCE, WOOLF, AND JOYCE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to establish the family as the material and ideological structure through which modernist novelists explore the place of the individual within the community. The thesis focuses on the works of Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. It looks at both the inscription of the family at the level of content in the works of these writers and also explores how their sensitivity to changes to the family politics of the early twentieth century feeds into a formal reappraisal of textual construction and a retheorisation of the author's relation to the novel. The introduction to the thesis establishes the extent to which the family has always been a critical site for the disputation of power relations and describes the escalation of this contention in the late Victorian period. With the intensification of the focus on the legitimacy of the family the very authority of the narrative of succession and descent that also underpins the nineteenth century novel increasingly comes under scrutiny. Chapter Two situates the work of Joseph Conrad in a philosophical context that sees his novels as staging the typically modernist, and typically novelistic confrontation between the individual and the community. Hegel and Nietzsche are adduced as the principal reference points in this chapter, each representing the apotheosis of one pole of the dialectic, that is Hegel/communalism, Nietzsche/individualism. Conrad is seen as valorising the concept of community/communality as an ideal whilst recognising that it is also a source of danger and corruption in the modern world. Chapter Three is an extension of this theme, an exploration of the way in which Lawrence's work continually navigates between these poles and is thus fundamentally expressive of a deep ambiguity where traditionally it has been seen as the confident manifestation of patriarchal oppressiveness. The chapter charts a movement in Lawrence's work towards an increasingly authoritarian perspective that eschews examination of the dynamics of the family in favour of a presentation of a Lawrentian ideal. Chapter Four examines Woolf's very different attitude towards the power relations operating within the family. Her critique of patriarchy represents a counter-narrative to Lawrence's perception of the fracturing of patriarchal authority. The chapter on Woolf is followed by one on Joyce which taking up the question of narrative strategies for opposing the family, thoroughly addresses the question of textuality, the extent to which writing itself is engaged in an anti-patriarchal, anti-familial economy. In the conclusion I restate my argument that modernist literature represents an assault on both the ideology and the material structure of the nineteenth century family. I argue that it is by understanding modernism in terms of the family rather than in terms of a concept such as patriarchy that writers as different as Woolf and Lawrence can be understood within the same discourse.

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Introduction: The Politics of the Family and the Modernist Novel

In their three volume study of the place of the woman writer in the twentieth-century Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that modernism is differently inflected for male and female writers. They claim the reason for this is that modernism is intimately connected with the 'ongoing battle of the sexes' (1: xii) set in train by the rise of feminism in the late nineteenth century and the demise of the Victorian concept of 'femininity'. They argue that whereas the defeat of the vision of liberation was a constant threat to the female writers engaged in the nineteenth century battle of the sexes, early twentieth century literary feminists were able to defend themselves against this possibility because:

the ideological and theological underpinnings of patriarchal culture had been severely weakened not just by the rise of women but also by the concomitant complex of phenomena which seemed to threaten a decline and fall of western man... (1: 89)

What Gilbert and Gubar have in mind by this apocalyptic 'complex of phenomena' is 'industrialism, the disappearance of God, the recession of the British Empire' (1: 90). All of these factors contributed to a new perception of male vulnerability and augmented a sense of increasing female power.

Thus Gilbert and Gubar themselves describe, in fairly conventional terms, the ideological background out of which modernism emerges. However, having identified a 'complex of phenomena' materially affecting the ideological structures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they effectively cast these different phenomena aside to insist that it is 'the sexual crisis that underlies modernism' (1: 162). This perspective leads them to read a work such as *Ulysses* (1922), rather simplistically, as an attempt to reconstitute patriarchal hierarchy through allusion to the literary patrilineage. I reject the idea that this is either Joyce's intention or the effect of his work. The gendered

interpretation of modernism put forward by Gilbert and Gubar oversimplifies the intensity of the self-reflexive formal awareness of modernism. My thesis argues that modernist works such as *Ulysses* not only applaud but actually embody opposition to the family in their structure. One might also question the extent to which a landmark of modernism such as Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27) can really be read as an attempt to shore up a threatened literary patrilineage given that it actually articulates a female literary tradition (George Sand and Mme. de Sévigné) that is handed down the female line.

I will argue in this thesis that in order to understand modernism there needs to be an interpretive marriage of form and content. In recent decades feminist critics such as Gilbert and Gubar have drawn attention to the content of modernist works. In so doing they have shown convincingly that sexual struggle looms large in this literature. However, I think they are wrong to emphasize this struggle as the motive force behind its generation. I will argue that modernism is not only a reaction to the challenge of feminism but also, and perhaps more importantly, to the challenge posed more generally by the reconfiguration of structures of authority within the family. I will argue that it is an oversimplification to suggest that the response to changes to the form and idea of the family in the early twentieth century splits along gender lines or indeed that industrialisation, the disappearance of God and the recession of the British Empire only has meaning for male writers. When Gilbert and Gubar turn to the 'family plot' in volume three of their work, what they focus on is the repression of maternity. My thesis will seek to show a far more thoroughgoing engagement between modernism and the family at all levels. For example, one of the ways in which the history of modernism can be linked into the history of the family is by looking at the similitude of their development in terms of their relationships to society. It is undoubtedly significant that just as the assumption that the patriarchal family communicates timeless and universal values is challenged in the late nineteenth century, so literature loses its public position and tends to become more

marginalized. Out of this marginalization were produced new forms of literature.¹

in Bennett, Wells and Conrad: Narrative in Transition

Linda Anderson¹ has identified the way in which the relationship between the author and society became increasingly problematical in the Edwardian period. She argues that the sense of social cohesion that enabled nineteenth century writers to see themselves as existing at the centre of society was breaking down. The critical discourse that was applied to the role of the novel in the Edwardian period demonstrates that the link between textual politics and the conception of the place of the writer in relation to his society is something that becomes an object of concern at the beginning of the twentieth century. The argument about what role the novel should play in society was carried forward in essays such as 'The Contemporary Novel' (1911) in which H.G.Wells argued that the novel should be a 'social mediator...the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas'. This position was most famously opposed by Henry James who set his face against the idea that the value of literature resided in its social utility in a letter to Wells stating 'art makes life, makes interest, makes importance' (July 1915)².

It is hardly surprising that a new form of literature was produced as a consequence of the author's reconceptualisation of his social and cultural position. With the breakdown of a secure sense of commonly held values it became increasingly difficult for literature to conceive of itself as the conscience of society. This challenge to the way in which literature had traditionally constructed its value was met by writers such as Henry James with the notion that literature was sufficient unto itself. Its virtue lay in its being the product of a

1. Patricia Stubbs points to this connection between the novel and the transmission of ideology by alluding to the Victorian convention of family readings which made the novel a powerful vehicle for the dissemination of social and cultural mores (18). (The system of referencing footnotes and the bibliographical conventions employed throughout are those of the *MLA Style Manual* (1985)).

2. See Leon Edel (154) for the quotation from 'The Contemporary Novel' and Edel (267) for the quotation from the Henry James letter of July 10th 1915.

fine mind and a unique sensibility. As a consequence of this growing awareness that a novel could no longer speak for the whole community, an awareness that was enhanced in material terms by the turning away from publication in mass circulation periodicals and towards, in the case for example of *Ulysses*, private publication in very small print runs, modernist writers were led to contemplate the causes and the consequences of this cultural fracture. I will argue in this introduction that the evolution of the family as an institution and an ideology in the late nineteenth century is very closely linked to the reconceptualisation of the place of the novel that was taking place at the same time. Just as the family increasingly came to be seen as a zone independent of, rather than simply analogous to, the external, public world, so too the novel became removed from its central public role, its concerns and form becoming more esoteric. It no longer pretended to compass the universal; indeed it implicitly questioned, through the removal of the omniscient narrator, whether such coverage were possible. It luxuriated in its exclusion and in a classic retroactive manoeuvre endeavoured to make a virtue of this necessity.

It is obvious to most readers of modernist literature that its formal innovatoriness is at least as significant as the novelty of its content. My thesis will link the formal, structural innovations of modernism to its understanding of the family. I will focus on the works of four canonical modernists who nevertheless provide a broad range of perspectives so that it is possible to draw generalisations about modernism as a whole from their work.

Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf, and Joyce, reveal through their different approaches to the idea and institution of the family both the range of this obsession at the level of content and also the dynamic relationship that exists between the family and the text as formal structure. The purpose of selecting these writers to illustrate the argument of the thesis is to demonstrate that this obsession with the family does not come from a particular class or gender but is intimately bound up with the search for a new form of narrative structure. The social and cultural diversity of the group is obviously crucial to establishing this point. At the same time the fact that each of these writers is seen, at least by some

critics, as exemplary of literary modernism will help to establish the centrality to debates on modernism of the ideas presented in this thesis.

I hope to show that it is only by challenging in their novels the narrative structure of realism, based on descent, that writers could successfully liberate their works from the authoritarian orthodoxy of the nineteenth century. Lionel Trilling in 'On the Teaching of Modern Literature' has argued that 'the characteristic element of modern literature, or at least of the most highly developed modern literature, is the bitter line of hostility to civilisation which runs through it' (19). I will show why this hostility towards civilisation is focused on the family. This thesis will examine how Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf and Joyce structure their opposition to their culture through an investigation of familial relations and an interrogation of the concept of the family through the content and organisation of their narratives. In so doing I hope to provide an interpretive key to modernism which could be applied to other texts.

One of the problems in talking about 'the family' is to identify exactly what is meant by this term. It can be understood in a number of ways, for example, as a social structure, an economic relationship, a set of roles, an emotional bond, an historical institution, or an ideology. I will touch on all these areas, not to do so would be to give a false picture of the cultural position of the family; but I will stress two aspects in particular: the role the concept of the family plays in organising the structure of the novel and the conceptual consequences for the novel once the authority of the family as an institution is felt to be questionable.

My thesis will show that a full understanding of the replication of the structural relations of the family within the novel cannot be had without also paying attention to the ambivalence that often accompanies the family's fictional depiction. I will argue for a marriage between the examination of the family as a social institution through the content of modernist novels and the modernist critique of the ideology of the family through the form of these same works.

When I talk about the family as a social institution what I have in mind is a relationship structure that was undergoing fundamental change towards the

end of the nineteenth century not only in its form but also in its relationship to the state. During the nineteenth century it is fair to say that the family developed into one of the central institutions of the polity. W.L.Burn in *The Age of Equipoise* says of Victorian England that 'the home and the family were the invention of the age' (246), a view shared by many historians and cultural critics, among them Peter Keating, who describes in *The Haunted Study* the 'almost mystical significance' (157) accorded the family in the Victorian period.

It is not easy to say exactly why this elevation in the status of the family should have come about in the nineteenth century. David Grylls in *Guardians and Angels* (20) has suggested five key areas which may have helped to promote a shift from economic to emotional bonds between parents and children leading to the development of the ideology of the family as an affective unit. The developments that he notes as significant are: increasing wealth at the end of the seventeenth century enabling families to construct separate living quarters for servants, thus fostering a greater familial self-consciousness; children living at home longer, partly as a result of the breakdown of the apprenticeship system; growth of education leading to children attaining economic independence later; growth of individualism; and the decline in the mortality rate, resulting in parents being more willing to enter into emotional relations with children now that they were no longer under the threat of imminent death.

Likewise Patricia Stubbs argues that the Victorian age elevated the status of the family because of the role it played in offering a retreat from the external world. This idea in particular is expressed most forcefully in John Ruskin's lecture, 'Of Queen's Gardens' delivered in Manchester in 1864, where he says:

Within the house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home - it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home... (59)

However subject to qualifications all of these conceptions about the emerging ideology of the family may be (I would also add the transfer of emotional energy from religion to the family to this roster of explanations), what is not in doubt is that during the nineteenth century the affective family comes to occupy a more central position in the ideological structures of society.

It was not only the 'idea' of the family that was constructed in the nineteenth century but also the conception of its constructedness. Rosalind Coward in *Patriarchal Precedents* has noted how the family became an obsessive object of concern in the late nineteenth century. Her work traces the debate that was sparked by anthropological investigations which suggested that perhaps the contemporary patriarchal organisation of the family had been preceded by a matriarchal formation. One consequence of this investigative work was to strip the family of its natural veneer so that it could now be viewed as an historically constructed institution and therefore not beyond the scope of criticism.

Friedrich Engels's *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, published in 1884, was a direct result of this historicising of the family through the pioneering work of anthropologists. It indicates how the ideology of the family was unravelled at the end of the nineteenth century by exposing the institution as not the selfless and natural organisational structure of humanity but an arrangement designed to protect and foster economic inequality. The very title of his work implies the importance of economic determinism, the position of the property system as the mediating factor between family and state.

It was part of the Marxist credo, embodied famously in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) that marriage on the basis of economic inequality was tantamount to prostitution:

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain...Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common...it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private. (50)

In drawing attention to the role played by economic inequalities in fostering oppression within the family Engels's work provides a valuable statement of a consciousness that becomes increasingly apparent in the literature of the early twentieth century and appears at the level of content in the works of many modernist writers. *The Rainbow* (1915), for example, is at least in part, concerned with the widening of experience that is available through economic self-sufficiency. Ursula fights hard to achieve the economic independence that

Lawrence had shown in *Sons and Lovers* (1913) evaded Gertrude Morel and led to the disastrously circumscribed possibilities of her life. Ursula, having filled in her teaching application forms and sent them off feels 'as if already she was out of reach of her father and mother, as if she had connected herself with the outer, greater world of activity, the man-made world' (409).

This is of course also a theme that runs through a great deal of the work of Virginia Woolf who famously elevates the economic above the political in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) where she describes the 'rust and corrosion' (49) of the belittling jobs that were the chief occupations of women before 1918 and her being saved from this fate by a legacy from her aunt. The news of this legacy reached her at approximately the same time as the act was passed that gave votes to women. Woolf's comment on this juxtaposition is that 'of the two - the vote and the money - the money, I own, seemed infinitely the more important' (48). Of course what both these works also testify to is the growing freedom that was a product of the new economic opportunities available to women in the early twentieth century.

Novels such as May Sinclair's *Audrey Craven* (1897) which give expression to this sense of enlarged opportunity for women are sometimes called 'New Woman' novels. What is significant about many of these works is that they demonstrate a concern not just with economic independence but with the freedom from the family that was the product of such independence. Thus in May Sinclair's novel it is only when in direst need and only then to aid her dying lover, Vincent Healy, that Katherine Haviland will condescend to solicit money from her family. Her visit to her uncle to request financial aid is treated as a major dramatic scene illustrating just what was at stake for New Women breaking the chains of dependence. Her uncle, James Piggott, regards Katherine (and the Havilands in general) as somewhat problematical since they do not conform to the accepted codes of family behaviour:

Family worship and the worship of the Family were different but equally indispensable forms of the one true religion. The stigma of schism, if not of atheism, attached to the Havilands in departing from the old traditions and forming a little sect by themselves. (162)

Despite his views, James does help Katherine, and the relations within that particular family prove to be supportive rather than repressive.

However, increasingly towards the end of the nineteenth century the family became the object of a criticism directed not only at how it functioned in practice but also at the nature of the authority contained in its Victorian structure. There are a number of late Victorian works which give voice to this opposition towards the absolute authority of the father within the family. At the same time, a whole series of reforms in the late nineteenth century legislated away paternally dictatorial powers. Kate Millett describes the period 1830-1930 as one in which patriarchal law was more or less consistently rolled back, and which saw the attenuation of the 'civil death' that women entered into upon marriage (67). Examples of late nineteenth century legislation that undermined the patriarchal structure of the family by diminishing the authority of the father are the Infants Bill 1886 which destroyed the power of the father-appointed guardian by recognising the mother's right to the children on the death of her husband, the Prevention of Cruelty Act 1889 which enabled the state to intervene for the protection of children, and the Summary Jurisdiction Act 1895 through which custody of the children could be granted to a wife. Modernist literature can thus be seen to exist on the cusp of a major change in social relations. It emerges at the same time as the nuclear family and as the father's authority in the home begins to be unravelled.

Underpinning the material structure of the nineteenth century family was an ideology that had remained largely unchanged since the seventeenth century. Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings* (1680) is the foundation text of the patriarchal ideology of the family in English political thought. Filmer posited an absolute political authority inherited from Adam by a line of fathers that ultimately constitutes the kingdom as a family, its head having the same unquestionable rights as the head of the household: 'If we compare the natural duties of a Father with those of a King, we find them to be all one, without any difference at all but only in the latitude and extent of them' (63).

Filmer's views did not go uncriticised even in the seventeenth century. The first of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), for instance, is an engagement with the ideas put forward by Filmer. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to trace the course of this debate. However, it is important to note that the contention between Locke and Filmer was essentially a political one to do with the balance of authority within the state (Filmer's work was published during the Exclusion Crisis of 1680 - he had died in 1653). The context of this dispute demonstrates quite clearly the way in which patriarchy navigates the line between the public and the private and draws the family into the centre of debate about the legitimate exercise of political power.

Patriarchy argues for an identity of state and family authority but does so from the perspective of good governance in the political realm. This orientation can be seen in Engels's derivation of the word 'family' which marks out an evolution of the institution from the political to the personal: '*Famulus* means a household slave and *Familia* signifies the totality of slaves belonging to one individual' (458). In other words the family emerges out of the quasi-political structure of the household. The ideology of the patriarchal family applies a single model of authority to the family and the state but this model is quite clearly derived from outside the family, from the government of the state.

This habit of thinking is so deeply ingrained in the nineteenth century that even writers opposed to patriarchy work within the assumption that the family and the state are directly correlative. Engels makes this clear when he says in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*:

The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamian marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male...It is the cellular form of civilised society, in which we can already study the nature of the antagonisms and contradictions which develop fully in the latter. (495)

The consequence of this perspective is an undertheorisation of the family itself. Engels is only interested in the social dimension of the family, it is a worthy object of study because it sheds light on the nature of political injustice. If one turns to the literary works of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

there are many examples of this use of the subject of the family as a mechanism for charting developments in society. This way of thinking underlies, for example, John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* (1922) which refers in *The Man of Property* (1906) to 'that mysterious concrete tenacity which renders a family so formidable a unit of society, so clear a reproduction of society in miniature' (11). I will argue later in this chapter that this use of the family as an illustration of the power relations that operate at state level between government and citizens is an orientation of thought that modernism challenges by placing emphasis on the private over the public. I will show that modernist literature truly tackles the subject of the family for the first time because it is in these works that the dynamics of the family are perceived to be of interest in their own right and not because they are analogous to the political dynamics of society as a whole.

In arguing for the need to consider both the form and content of modernist works, I will be seeking to show that modernist literature does not only take the family, and its inequities, as its subject matter but that it also addresses the nature of the family through the form of its texts. John Locke describes the authority of the patriarchal father in the following terms:

This "fatherly authority" then, or "right of fatherhood", in our author's sense is a divine unalterable right of sovereignty, whereby a father or a prince hath an absolute, arbitrary, unlimited and unlimitable power over the lives, liberties, and estates of his children and subjects; so that he may take or alienate their estates, sell, castrate, or use their persons as he pleases, they being all his slaves, and he lord or proprietor of everything, and his unbounded will their law. (*First Treatise of Government* 10)

It is my contention that this assessment of Filmer shares its absolutism with the narrative practice of the novel of classical realism. Patriarchy demands a narrative organisation of absolute control even in the midst of the perception of social anarchy. Thus whereas *Middlemarch* (1871) deflates the controlling connections that Casaubon and Lydgate attempt to uncover, it cannot itself abandon this form of construction as a compensatory expression of the organising power of the author. The modernist novel by contrast confronts a universe in which events do not happen by necessity through the will of the Creator by integrating the principle of contingency, as a key element, into its structure.

To summarise then: the concept of the family in the nineteenth century was characterised by a type of authority that centred on the father, that was ideologically absolute, that emanated from the Bible and that permeated other structures of authority throughout society. It is this model of familial authority that the thesis understands to be in place during the nineteenth century and it is this model of authority with which the modernist literature studied in this thesis engages. That is not to say that the particular circumstances of individual writers, their class, religion, or gender for instance, do not affect their understanding or presentation of the family but simply to affirm at the conceptual level that there is a common ideological framework for understanding the politics of the family that is inherited by the authors in this thesis. It is at this level that one can say that in dealing with the family here, one is dealing with an ideology that all the writers in this thesis had to confront.

Hermione Lee describes *The Years* (1937) as making an X-ray of Woolf's childhood 'as a prototype of Victorian patriarchal repression' (96). Undoubtedly this perception of the repressive nature of the authority that flowed through the family is justified by the evidence in Woolf's and others' writing. However, we should also acknowledge that the operation of power within the family is more complex than is allowed by the suggestion that it is simply repressive and indeed we should also note that not all the writers studied in this thesis were unambiguously opposed to patriarchy as an ideology. In *Sons and Lovers*, for example, the hierarchical and patriarchal model of power which feeds on the alliance of religious precept and economic inequality is broken down in the Morel family. The father, Walter Morel, is not religious or authoritarian, in fact 'authority was hateful to him' (52). From the perspective of Lawrence's later novels it would be quite easy to diagnose the problems of the Morel household as arising, not out of the repressive nature of patriarchal authority, but out of its derogation and the assumption of authority by the mother. Much of Lawrence's work is directed towards re-establishing the patriarchal authority that he considers to have been undermined by the annexation of authority by women.

Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* provides a theoretical basis for an understanding of power that does not only stress its repressive nature. In fact Foucault argues that the actions and procedures of power have been obscured by the juridico-political discourse in which they have been embedded. He believes that the presentation of power as repressive can be traced to the juridical monarchy and that it is this hierarchical model that identifies an authority and a transgressor. Foucault argues that this formulation reduces power to a negative force but that it is in fact supple and devious operating not through punishment but control. In other words one shouldn't look to what is prohibited but to what seems natural in order to understand the extent of power. Power doesn't emanate from a central point but is 'the moving substrate of force relations' (1: 93); it is immanent in sexual and economic relations not determinant of them. Thus he describes power as constructive:

In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (*Discipline and Punish* 194)

May Sinclair's *The Life and Death of Harriet Frean* (1922) thoroughly explores this idea that the real power of an ideology such as the ideology of the family is felt not through what it represses but through its construction and legitimation of certain modes of behaviour. In the novel, the daughter, Harriet, has no self-knowledge, her efforts are directed towards appearing to act well. Appearing to act well means acting in accordance with the modes of behaviour prescribed by her parents: 'Ugly. Being naughty was just that. Doing ugly things. Being good was being beautiful like Mamma. She wanted to be like her mother' (15). When Harriet disobeys the instructions of her parents not to venture out of the family garden she is punished by being made to feel that she has violated the sanctity of family life:

"Isn't there to be a punishment?"

"No. People are punished to make them remember. We want you to forget."...

"Forget ugly things. Understand Hatty, nothing is forbidden. We don't forbid because we trust you to do what we wish. To behave beautifully...There, there."

She hid her face on his breast against his tickly coat, and cried. She would always have to do what they wanted; the unhappiness of not doing it was more than she could bear. All very well to say there would be no punishment; *their* unhappiness was the punishment. It

hurt more than anything. It kept on hurting when she thought about it'.
(23)

It is because power produces reality and because criticism of the family in the nineteenth century continued to take place from within the dominant family-oriented ideology, that those works that pre-date modernism do not fundamentally undermine the family. Modernist writers understood in a new way that part of the meaning of their work was contained in its structure: 'the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze...' (*Heart of Darkness* 138). There are many examples of this sensitivity towards form in modernist works. One of the most famous is Woolf's deconstruction of the lecture in *A Room of One's Own*, revealing how an anti-authoritarian perspective can permeate the structure of a text even in genres that traditionally lay emphasis on their own authoritativeness. Again, I do not mean to argue here that modernist literature was simply anti-authoritarian, but to demonstrate how attentiveness to the form of a work might complicate our understanding of its content. The chapter on Lawrence will reveal how important this approach can be for a writer whose form and content can be read in politically divergent ways. It is for this reason that the thesis insists on the necessity of keeping the form and content of modernist works in dialogue. The sensitivity of modernists to the politics of structure is the reason why this thesis will examine the treatment of the family at both the level of form and content.

From what I have said above it will be clear that I am arguing that the structure of narratives has a cultural determination. In *Beginnings* Edward Said points out that narrative prose fiction is by no means a genre common to all literary traditions (81). There are, for example, no Modern Arabic novels prior to the twentieth century. The novel performs a specific function in specific cultures but essentially it always ministers to a desire to modify reality (82). Thus in arguing that modernism reconfigures the family I am saying that this is both a reaction to perceived changes to the position of the family in society and also an expression of desire, a writing in anticipation of reality:

modernism was an aesthetic and ideological phenomenon that was a response to the crisis of what could be called *filiation* - linear,

biologically grounded process, that which ties children to their parents - which produced the counter-crises within modernism of affiliation, that is, those creeds, philosophies, and visions re-assembling the world in new non-familial ways. (xii)

Modernist works then tend to produce meaning through 'adjacency, not sequentially or dynastically' (10). What this means in practice is that modernist narrative no longer follows the pattern of the nineteenth century. It cannot, nor will it, mimic an ideology that has been exposed:

narrative represents the generative process - literally in its mimetic representation of men and women in time, metaphorically in that by itself it generates succession and multiplication of events after the manner of human procreation; yet the history of the nineteenth century novel documents the increasing awareness of a gap between the representatives of fictional narrative and the fruitful, generative principle of human life...The awareness, therefore, is that narrative cannot represent, cannot truly mime marriage *and* be original fiction at the same time.' (146)

Because nineteenth century novels share their formal structure with the conventional nineteenth century family, however critical they may be, they cannot undermine the institution of the family. It is not possible for nineteenth century realistic novels to exercise a radical assault on the family because they speak through the same organisational system. In effect any such work would deconstruct itself, or perhaps one could go so far as to say that the mode of organising the narrative would not allow such ideas expression since that would threaten the very existence of the text. The temporal disjunctions and discontinuities of the narrative practice of modernist literature on the other hand, reveal the extent to which modernism consciously abandons the ideologically tainted narrative structures of the nineteenth century. Modernist literature abandons the descent structure and the patriarchal position of the all-knowing author/narrator in the text. It can and does attack the family on a fundamental and radical level. Clearly then the structure of narrative is intimately connected to the ideological construction of the structure of the family.

The reasons for using the concept (and historical institution) of the family as a glass through which to examine modernist literature are manifold, but perhaps the strongest is this replication of familial structures of authority within the novel and the consequences of this for the production of individuality in the family which the novel as a genre explores.

Having established the connection between novelistic narrative and the family on a theoretical level I would now like to look at how these ideas can be applied to mark out the change from the realistic literature of the nineteenth century to the modernist literature of the early twentieth century.

It would be quite wrong to suggest that nineteenth century literature does not deal with tensions within the family. Obviously the Brontës, Mrs Gaskell, Thackeray, George Eliot and Charles Dickens all have a great deal to say on this subject. However, as Patricia Stubbs points out (28), whilst they might attack individual abuses of the marital/domestic system, they do not criticise the system itself: 'the major novelists of the mid-Victorian period contain their critique of women's role within an overall concurrence in moral and social imperatives...' (38). In fact some critics go so far as to argue that in the Victorian period the dramatisation of family conflicts could be a way of presenting, containing and perhaps even resolving deeper tensions within society. This is the position taken by Steven Mintz who argues for the centrality of the father-son conflict in Victorian culture but conservatively sees this confrontation not as destructive of family ties, but rather as utilising the safety of this insulated domain as a way of working out and containing larger socio-cultural negotiations aimed at establishing the acceptable limits of authority.

To Mintz Victorian writers (he mentions Dickens, Trollope, Thackeray, Eliot, Butler, and Gosse) thematise the enormous changes undergone by their society through the changes in relations between family members. He argues that in the work of these writers filial revolt rarely leads to the breakdown of family bonds but is rather the process through which epochal change is registered and contained.

Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* (1907) is an example of the kind of work that Mintz has in mind. From the subtitle, 'A Study of two Temperaments', it is obvious that Gosse understands his story as the inevitable conflict between two ages and does not think of it, or have any intention of framing it, as an assault on the institution of the family:

The affection of these two persons was assailed by forces in comparison with which the changes that health or fortune or place introduce are as nothing. It is a mournful satisfaction, but yet a satisfaction, that they were both of them able to obey the law which says that ties of close family relationship must be honoured and sustained. Had it not been so, this story would never have been told. (35)

I agree with Mintz's assessment of the conservative nature of anti-familial rebellion in the nineteenth century. Whilst narrative shared the assumptions of the authoritarian structure it was attacking then this attack was bound to be somewhat neutered. Indeed as Gosse frames it above, it was only considered possible to speak of the family from within the familial framework: 'Had it not been so, this story would never have been told'.

An example of what I mean is illustrated by *The Way of All Flesh*, which incidentally Mintz classes quite wrongly as a text of conservative rebellion. *The Way of All Flesh* which finally appeared in 1903, but upon which Samuel Butler worked intermittently between 1872 and 1884, was one of the most important disabusing texts to emerge about Victorian family life for the writers of the early twentieth century. Butler's novel is a radical, not a conservative assault on the family because it puts into narrative practice, through a rejection of traditional textual dynamics, its critique of the hierarchical structures of society that are reproduced by religion and the family. The narrator, Overton, for example, is far from being the omniscient manipulative voice providing the coherence of a meta-language that one might expect from a novel say by George Eliot. There is no sense as there is, for example, in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) (what I would describe narratologically as a characteristic example of nineteenth century realism) that the work represents the unfolding of a preordained narrative that will be guided to fruition by the hand of the author/father. The plot of *The Mill on the Floss* is dictated by the father to the son and inscribed in the family Bible:

"Now write - write as you'll remember what Wakem's done to your father, and you'll make him and his feel it, if ever the day comes. And sign your name Thomas Tulliver". (357)

Unlike Eliot's narrative which is based upon a view of history as the elaboration of 'necessary laws',³ *The Way of All Flesh* has a provisional nature in which the arbitrariness of its construction is foregrounded suggesting an escape from the straiteningly controlled confines of deterministic narrative. It is precisely the formal embodiment of this idea that strikes the greatest blow in the novel against the conventions of Victorian patriarchy.

In escaping from the authoritarian repression of his father, an authoritarianism that rests on religion, Ernest Pontifex eventually falls into association with Pryer, an authoritarian religious radical. Pryer's patriarchal ministry: 'we should tell them what they must do, and in an ideal state of things should be able to enforce their doing it...' (246) which feeds his rejection of the Bible as a text that goes into the home and is open to unauthorised interpretations, can be contrasted to Overton's collaborative non-authoritarian construction of his text:

Again I asked Ernest whether he minded my printing this. He winced, but said, "No, not if it helps you to tell your story: but don't you think it is too long?"

I said it would let the reader see for himself how things were going in half the time that it would take me to explain them to him. (251)

The narrative method of another novel of familial conflict, Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1862) provides an interesting comparison to the narrative methods of *The Way of All Flesh*. Turgenev's characters are all to a large extent limited, predetermined by the elaborate narrative frameworks which are erected around them to explain their present condition. The author does not allow the abandonment of this placing, this fixed position. All action can be explained by reference to the larger historical narrative which is, in effect, the father of the character. In other words, although Turgenev's novel is concerned with intra-familial conflict, it stops short, in a way that Butler's novel or the modernist novels of the early twentieth century examined here do not, of universalising this conflict into an attack on authority in general that has repercussions for the construction of the text itself.

3. George Eliot quotes this view of history approvingly in an 1856 essay on Wilhelm Heinrich von Riehl (qtd. in A.S. Byatt's introduction to *The Mill on the Floss* 13).

Fathers and Sons thus retains the forms of classical realism so that when Bazarov meets Odintsova for the first time the description of the event is interrupted at the beginning so that Odintsova can be firmly placed in the narrative (and familial) framework: 'Anna Sergeevna Odintsova was the daughter of Sergei Nikolaevich Lektov, famous for his looks, his affairs and his gambling who...' (92). In this respect Turgenev's novel is emblematic of the late nineteenth century outlook, at once cognisant of the inadequacies of contemporary family life yet ultimately unwilling to abandon the security of its structure. The friction between generations that Nikolai Petrovich Kirsanov recognises as natural in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* is therefore very different to the attack on the institution of the family unleashed by Woolf or Lawrence.

There are then many late nineteenth century works that are critical of the relations that existed within the family but which do not, as a consequence, disrupt the conventional structure of the realist novel. I think, however, that writers such as Woolf and Joyce could not go down this path of muted critique. They perceived that during the nineteenth century the family had been elevated to the centre of society so that it occupied an ideological position which validated all forms of authority. Modernism built on a recognition of the deficient realisation of the family of popular ideology in nineteenth-century texts, by realising the need to reject traditional modes of representation in an attempt to forgo inherited and unexamined constructions of authority. The list of works from the late nineteenth century to the outbreak of the Second World War which elucidate the Victorian nescience or repression of the violence, tyranny, and sexuality contained within the family is a long one, from *The Way of All Flesh* (1903) to *Finnegans Wake* (1939). What these works have in common is a consciousness of subverting inherited narrative traditions, a recognition of the connection between authority in the family and the authority of the narrative organisation of the text.

The significant break with conventional narrative structure introduced by modernism enabled writers such as Woolf and Joyce to construct anti-authoritarian texts which strike at the heart of the ideology of the family. It is

this narrative reformation that establishes the distance between modernists and those other writers who may engage with the subject of the family but who do not embody the substance of their critique in the form of their work. Thus parts of Engels's *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, for instance, are simply negotiations between the acknowledged experts: Bachofen, Morgan, and McLennan with Engels as mediator. He even borrows the scientific status of the text from Darwin by virtue of his referential title. Freud represents a somewhat more problematical figure in this respect. In *Beginnings* Edward Said takes Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) as instrumental in theorising a new form of narrative structure that was non-linear and therefore anti-familial. However, in works where Freud, at least in theory, must build on foregoing authorities (as he does for example in the quasi-anthropological *Totem and Taboo* (1913)) there is a strong sense of commitment to the authoritarian *Weltanschauung* of the nineteenth century in his intertwining of accredited authorities in order to generate the appearance of solid scholarship.

It might be argued that Freud and Engels are forced to rely heavily on acknowledged experts as they range beyond the specific limits of their expertise and that this is not a product of an authoritarian perspective that has a bearing on the way in which they understand the structure of the family but simply an empirical necessity. In terms of the scientific validity of their texts it may be true that they are trapped within a narrative framework, which as Jean-François Lyotard has argued in *The Postmodern Condition* demands the engagement with authorities as a criterion for 'truth'. However, both Samuel Butler and D.H. Lawrence, conspicuous rejectors of the authority of their parents, are also fervent in their assault on the hierarchical structure of knowledge. Lawrence published two lengthy assaults on Freudian psychoanalysis in 1921 and 1922 in which he recognises no authority other than his own intuition. Butler's whole life and work can be read as a concerted rejection of accredited authorities. Just as Ernest in *The Way of All Flesh* publishes an essay debunking the stature of the Greek tragedians, so Butler through four volumes of evolutionary theory sought to undermine Darwin's theory of 'natural selection', an effort more or less universally ignored by

professional scientists much to Butler's chagrin. He also spent time propounding a theory summed up in the title of his publication of 1897, *The Authoress of the Odyssey* which seems to strike right at the heart of patriarchal culture.

Both these writers refuse to build their intellectual insights on the Victorian model of incremental advance: 'That men may rise on stepping-stones/Of their dead selves to higher things' (Tennyson, *In Memoriam* 1850). They both wish to start anew and out of a Cartesian scepticism forge the truth from their own thinking. This method of working, rewriting from the beginning rather than building on what has gone before, is a fundamental aspect of the modernist assault on the authoritarianism of the family. It demonstrates the importance of examining the form and content of modernist writing simultaneously. As Hermione Lee states with reference to Virginia Woolf: 'In her feminist writing and in all her later novels, her strategies of anti-authoritarian ridicule are an essential part of her modernism' (278).

The work of Joyce is particularly interesting in this regard and goes some way towards answering those critics, such as Gilbert and Gubar, who argue that the modernist assault on patriarchy takes place from within patriarchal conventions. In writing *Ulysses*, Joyce structures his novel around one of the foundational texts of western culture. Indeed in his introduction to *The Fictional Father* Robert Con Davis points out the significance of the rewriting of *The Odyssey* which begins with the absent father and works towards Odysseus's reinstatement as the representative of paternal/patriarchal authority (4). However, Joyce's *Ulysses* by no means follows this triumphant trajectory and in fact ends with the defeat of the suitors not through their being vanquished by Bloom but through the pricking of their conceit in Molly's closing monologue. Indeed Christine Van Boheemen, amongst others, has pointed out that the very title of Joyce's work both refers to and indicates the absence of Homer from the text (144). I simply do not agree with Gilbert and Gubar (156) that the decontextualised, fragmentary, unattributed, and often unrecognisable allusions made by Joyce to the patriarchal literary canon constitute a convincing reinscription or defence of patriarchy. Conrad's acknowledgement in *Nostromo*

(1904) of a debt to his own fictional creation of an authority, Avellanos' *Fifty Years of Misrule*, seems to me to represent another dent in the smooth facade of patriarchal authority. It amounts to a recognition that texts stand in a non-originary relationship to other texts; at the same time it is a textualisation of the very authority which is supposed to stand outside the work and vouch for its objective truth. Just as *Nostromo* itself suggests the impossibility of constructing objective history, so the reference to Avellanos reminds us that authority itself may be part of the same text as that over which it exercises governance. In other words, that there might not be any external, objective position from which authority can be generated.

In both these cases Joyce and Conrad go to some lengths to undermine the authority of their own narratives. This, I would suggest, is typical of modernist narrative construction. One of the ways in which the authority of narrative structure could be challenged was through a form of construction that depended upon the principle of chance; an appreciation that events might have happened otherwise and do not constitute an inevitability. In *Darwin's Plots* Gillian Beer makes the case for understanding narrative construction as a product of a shared culture. Cultural shifts, of the kind induced by the gradual acceptance of evolutionary theory through the latter part of the nineteenth century, will therefore have consequences for the organisation of narratives. For example Beer draws attention to the fact that Darwin's questioning of precedent design is reflected in novels which increasingly place the novelist within the language of the text thus acknowledging the loss of absolute creative, directive authority (45), a loss that clearly has consequences for understanding the authority of the father within the family.

Narratologically one of the consequences of this Darwinian 'dysteleology' is, according to Beer, the elevation of the principle of the determinism of chance. Natural selection constitutes the destruction of belief systems, such as Hegel's belief in History, that stress the teleology of narratives. One might argue that prior to the pervasive influence of Darwin's ideas, the nineteenth century was dominated by the capitalistic construction of authority in which the system of inheritance bequeaths a plot where the child is powerless to escape from the

desire of the father, as Tom Tulliver is in *The Mill on the Floss*. In the inherited plot everything has already gone before, the parameters are mapped out and the story pre-articulated. In a way the text reflects the writer's conception of the universe as ordered or structured according to some preceding ordinance. A perfect illustration of what I mean by the nineteenth-century, pre-ordained narrative of descent can be found in Johann Buddenbrooks's letter to his daughter Tony, persuading her of the need to enter into an arranged marriage, in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1901):

My child, we are not born for that which, with our short-sighted vision, we reckon to be our small personal happiness. We are not free, separate, and independent entities, but like links in a chain, and we could not by any means be what we are without those who went before us and showed us the way, by following the straight and narrow path, not looking to right or left. Your path, it seems to me, has lain all these weeks sharply marked out for you, and you would not be my daughter, nor the grand-daughter of your Grand-father who rests in God, nor a worthy member of our own family, if you really have it in your heart, alone, wilfully, and light-headedly to choose your own unregulated path. (114)

The letter is signed 'With unfailing affection, YOUR LOVING FATHER'. This then is the ideological structure of family-oriented narrative organisation that the modernist novel must resist. The problem for modernist literature lies in determining how this structure can be overcome and with what it can be replaced.

It is tempting to read the career of Thomas Hardy as symbolic of the gap between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries opened by the shift in narrative discourse that requires a form of textual organisation not dependent on the structure of the family. Hardy's work obsessively charts the influence of the family narrative on the fate of his characters and the structure of his plots. The significance of this narrative reaches breaking point and collapses in the last novel that Hardy wrote, *Jude the Obscure*, published in 1896. One of the earliest scenes in the novel concerns Jude's failure to protect Farmer Troutham's cornfield from the birds. The field is presented by Hardy as a text in which one could read the history of the village if one knew how:

The fresh harrow-lines seemed to stretch like the channelings in a piece of new corduroy, lending a meanly utilitarian air to the expanse, taking away its gradations, and depriving it of all history beyond that of the few recent months, though to every clod and stone there really attached associations enough and to spare - echoes of songs from ancient harvest-days, of spoken words, and of sturdy deeds. Every inch of ground had been the

site, first or last, of energy, gaiety, horseplay, bickerings, weariness...in that ancient cornfield many a man had made love-promises to a woman at whose voice he had trembled at the next seed-time after fulfilling them in the church adjoining. (53)

Jude's failure to keep the birds from Farmer Troutham's grain threatens the harvest, the generation of new crops in the Spring. In fact given the theme of the novel it is not too fanciful to read the image of the rooks eating the farmer's seed as proleptic of the failure of generation, that is the death of Jude's progeny, traced by the novel. Breaking into the academic world of Christminster cannot be achieved by Jude within the terms of a Hardy narrative, it would require the combined action of the generations, a narrative of descent: 'it was my poverty and not my will that consented to be beaten. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one' (398). It is precisely this kind of narrative that Hardy eschews and the possibility of which *Jude the Obscure* destroys. It might be said therefore that Hardy gives up the writing of novels with the recognition that the family narrative is dead: 'At a very late hour the intelligence was brought to him that a child had been prematurely born, and that it, like the others was a corpse' (416). Modernism's reformulation of narrative begins at the point where the novels of Hardy end.

One can also see this transition in the transformation of Hardy's 'Fate' which often serves as the engine of the narrative in his work, into the blind force of chance which often underlies modernist narratives. Fredric Jameson in *The Political Unconscious* describes the contingent construction of Conrad's texts as being the chief mechanism of their generation. In *Lord Jim* (1900), for example, the meeting of the two principal characters is effected by a dog who is completely marginal to the story itself. Jameson argues that this way of generating discourse is so pervasive in the works of the early twentieth century that it represents an 'ethic' of their construction in which the whole idea of the rational universe as contained in the dense web-like logical connectedness of a novel such as *Middlemarch* is destroyed by the unmanageable accidents of chance.

The four author studies in this thesis will look at how this 'ethic' fits into the modernist restructuring of the novel, based on a critical conception of the

family. There are three key elements to this revaluation of the family and the novel that I will be tracing. I have already mentioned the structural consequences of the assault on the family for the form of the text and the way in which modernist works interrogate patriarchy and the family at the level of content. Now I would like to look in more detail at the significance of the modernist reformulation of the relationship between the public and the private which I touched on earlier.

What is new about the approach to the family developed by modernism is its attempt to understand the political structure of society through an exploration of the personal relationships within the family, and what is also new, to understand these relationships as creating a dynamic independent of the power systems generated by political society. Modernist novels then do not deny outright the efficacy of the family/state analogy. They reformulate it and reverse its assumption to stress the private over the public. Modernist novels validate private experience, truth to the self, rather than the public recognition of society. In so doing they challenge the western cultural tradition in which power has traditionally been understood as having been generated from outside the family and applied to it, making the family its object.

Modernist literature then does not simply see the replication of the oppression of the state within the family. Those theorists who concentrate heavily on materialistic evidence tend to deny, in a way that modernist writers do not, that the family is a dynamic zone of activity in its own right and not merely an appendage of the state apparatus. For example, according to Juliet Mitchell, Wilhelm Reich saw the family as society's agent for the promotion of sexual repression, 'the authoritarian state in miniature' (210). Reich's work, in particular *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, describes the way in which the family can be manipulated by the state to perpetuate its own institutional validity. Foucault makes a similar point in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*:

The family organisation, precisely to the extent that it was insular and heteromorphous with respect to the other power mechanisms, was used to support the great "manoeuvres" employed for the Malthusian control of the birthrate, for the populationist incitements, for the

medicalization of sex and the psychiatrization of its nongenital forms.

(100)

However, he also introduces the countervailing concept of 'double conditioning' to suggest the way in which the exercise of power in this relationship is not one-dimensional, from high to low, but in fact the overall strategy of the state is in part defined by the possibilities inscribed at the local level. In other words, Foucault cautions against a simple application of the family analogy to the state, or indeed the assumption that the family can be neatly fitted into the structures of state power. In fact Foucault points towards the fact that the family can be read as operating in a completely independent zone of power relations that has the potential to contradict the demands of the nineteenth century state for absolute fealty. An example of this potential source of conflict is expressed by Mrs Durant in D.H. Lawrence's short story 'Daughters of the Vicar' (1911). She is distressed that her youngest son, Alfred, who has joined the navy, has gone off to serve the state in 'slavery' instead of remaining at home to serve her.

The establishment of separate and antagonistic spheres of influence, the domestic and the social, expressed by Mrs. Durant is an idea that was familiar in nineteenth century thought, for example, through the political philosophy of Hegel. Indeed in 'The Daughters of the Vicar' Lawrence very clearly rejects the way in which the family of the reverend Lindlay is cut off from the parish. Repeatedly Lawrence's work gives passionate expression to the conflict between the social and domestic spheres, the danger posed by an imbalance between the public and the private generated by a retreat into the family. Clearly then it is important to understand not only what one might call the material-historical relationship of the family to the state but also the conception of this relationship, how the *idea* of this relationship has an effect on the form and content of modernist literature.

Foucault's *History of Sexuality* shows the historical and emotional depth of the idea of this relationship between the organisation and structure of the state and the family through exploring the parallels drawn in ancient texts, for instance Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*. Foucault highlights the importance of the relationship to the self that these ancient texts elaborate. He points up the way

in which the concept of self-mastery, *enkrateia*, is integrated into the ethical and political structure of the state so that it is only after one has proved oneself capable of self-mastery that one is worthy to rule the household and ultimately wield political power. The *History of Sexuality*, particularly volume two, demonstrates the idea of an inextricable bond between self-government, familial government and state government.

It is the contention of my thesis that this idea comes down in almost exactly this form to the novelists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, it is inconceivable that the faults of the fathers in a novel like *Buddenbrooks*, should not be read in terms of a wider critique of the exercise of power within the socio-political milieu of their culture. Even more obviously this is the case in Dickens's work. *Bleak House* (1852-3) is a novel obsessed with the right government of the family and even extends this examination of familial government to the role the state plays in this guise to its wards Ada and Richard. It is to a large extent through its exploration of these familial relationships that the novel is able to articulate its wider themes 'the bearing of Justice and Equity on religion, morals and ethics, and on social sanctions and institutions' as they are described by Q.D. Leavis in '*Bleak House: A Chancery World*' (174). It seems to me that this expansion outwards from the government of the family to the government of the state is the natural movement of novels that predate the emergence of modernism.

If one looks at modernist works it is much more difficult to identify so clear a structure in which the family acts purely as the ground of critique upon which can be launched a more general interpretation of society. Of course there are any number of modernist novels by the authors studied in this thesis in which the fathers sin in some way against the ethic of *enkrateia*. For example Walter Morel in *Sons and Lovers*, Simon Dedalus in *Ulysses*, de Barral in *Chance* (1913), Almayer in *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and Mr. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), consistently suffer to some extent from just such a deficiency. This is demonstrated by their lack of *sophrosyne*, or moderation in the exercise of pleasures. In the examples above there is contained a catalogue of paternal abuses: selfishness, drunkenness, violence, cruelty,

obsession, introspection, and dissolution. However, whilst this enumeration of paternal deficiencies certainly reveals a great deal about the modernist view of the contemporary manifestation of paternal authority and whilst this must certainly have ramifications for the way in which the exercise of power is understood at the level of the state, there is a fundamental difference here between works that promote a reading which is to do with the exercise of power within the state, and these modernist works which do not simply promote readings that rest on a hierarchy in which the family is used to illustrate a more general thesis. These works are interested in the dynamics of family power in their own right. This is certainly not to suggest that they cannot be read as social critiques. In Woolf's work, for example, her critique of patriarchy means that many of her novels enable and even perhaps promote a reading in which the attack on the father can also be read as an attack on the authority of the state. In this case the linking of these forms of power means that the family is subject to a more intense investigation since Woolf regards it as the incubator of all forms of social and political oppression. The point is that the impetus for the critique of social structures comes from an investigation of the internal dynamics of the family. Woolf does not project her political views onto the family, these views are developed through her understanding of the family itself.

In this emphasis on the internal, the private, modernists have laid themselves open to the accusation that their works are apolitical. This is a charge that has been levelled in particular at Joyce and Conrad although Woolf too occasionally comes in for this criticism. Patricia Stubbs says, for instance, that she reveals a 'failure to carry her feminism through into her novels' (231). Lawrence on the other hand, has often been attacked for what critics have perceived to be a simple-minded reduction of the political to the personal, described by Scott Sanders in the following terms:

[Lawrence's] Freudian paradigm of politics as the interaction of an authoritarian father-figure who craves affection with the subservient children who crave authority. (112)

However, the development of feminist criticism has, somewhat ironically, vindicated Lawrence's reading of the subjective, the personal, as having a political resonance. Thus Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson sees *Women in Love* (1921)

as fairly radical in so far as it examines patriarchy by exploring the link between the sexual, the personal, and larger social forces. In so doing it reveals the permeation of patriarchy throughout culture (105). In a sense then it can be argued that criticism has only relatively recently caught up with the advances of modernism.

There are of course problems in generalising about modernism on the basis of the limited number of authors it has been possible to study in this thesis and indeed even amongst this quartet of writers there are quite clearly marked differences of temperament, aesthetics and politics. For example, Lawrence's early work seems to recognise a fault in the proper exercise of authority within the family which stems from the inadequacy of the father, the power of the mother fills the vacuum that is left. In his later work Lawrence consciously understands this form of relationship to be produced by women and to lead to a form of social organisation that is destructive and inhibiting. He asserts in his last works, for example in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), the desirability of reconstituting society along its 'proper' patriarchal lines. So it is not possible to suggest that modernism is simply anti-patriarchal. It is necessary to look at how each of the writers studied in this thesis responds to the crisis of patriarchy, or authority within the family, that had become apparent since the late nineteenth century.

By devoting individual chapters to Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf, and Joyce I hope to show that although very different in their approaches, each of these writers work out their conception of the proper exercise of authority within the family not only at the level of content but also through reconceptualising the form of the novel.

Lawrence's work examines the family by breaking apart its dynamics into the opposed mother and father principles. Significantly as his work develops an increasingly overt renunciation of the mother its textual aesthetic becomes more authoritarian. Thus Lawrence's first novel *The White Peacock* (1911) embodies the dream of Paul Morel. It enables the family to live in an atmosphere of mutual love and support but only by transporting it to an isolated

countryside and excluding the father. However, where the novel examines the full dynamics of the contemporary family through the figures of Meg and George, or Annable and his wife, there is found, even in this earliest of Lawrence's novels, a battlefield productive of violently antagonistic relations. As George describes it to Lettie: "marriage is more of a duel than a duet. One party wins and takes the other captive, slave, servant - what you like" ' (460). The Saxtons contain a residual trace of the ideological ideal of the Victorian family but the tensions in the relationships of the younger generation indicate that the old forms of social organisation can no longer be sustained.

In *The Rainbow* family solidarity seems to be premised on limited opportunity, for Anna public life is described as being 'less than nothing'. As the world widens for the next generation their relationship to the home becomes increasingly ambivalent until finally the orientation of Ursula and Gudrun in *Women in Love* is the anti-Victorian pursuit of personal equality not the public, contractual validation of marriage. Lawrence's preoccupation with the power dynamic of personal relations makes him, especially in the early novels, a forensic investigator of the marriage bond.

As the repudiation of the mother advances through Lawrence's novels, textually they lose their polylogical quality and increasingly the political turn towards patriarchy is accompanied by a textual aesthetic based on prescription rather than enquiry. The author takes control, and the works become more obviously polemical and saturated with Lawrentian discourse so that Mellors's announcement in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) that tight red trousers are the answer to all society's ills can be taken to be the view of the author.

Conrad, like Lawrence, struggles with the individualistic form of the novel to try to deal with the community/family which seems in the modernist universe to be unimaginable and therefore already lost. He positions man within an insouciant, alienated universe symbolised by the sea. Within this context, the family unit is virtually non-existent. The negative appearance of the family in the early works, *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) perhaps signals the problematical nature of this form of existence. Conrad's work

seems to suggest that in the absence of the family the individual must find some other way to determine his identity. He outlines a position in which identity is something that the individual creates through his own actions. According to Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right* (1820) this position is incompatible with the demands of the family which seeks passivity and self-preservation not the testing challenge of confrontation and threat. In other words Conrad, unlike Lawrence, positions the construction of identity outside the frame of genetic familial relations. However, Conrad's work sustains a commitment to the ideology of the family and the ship's crew comes to represent this ideal in Conrad's work.

If Woolf's novels are sometimes described as apolitical that is because they do not explicitly deal with contemporary social issues in the way that say H.G.Wells's *Ann Veronica* (1909) is an issues-led novel. However, they do consistently examine the production of subjectivity in contemporary society, the constraints on female identity in patriarchal culture, and, perhaps most overwhelmingly of all, the moral corruption that lies beneath the facade of Victorian and Edwardian respectability. Woolf's work directly confronts the problem that faced women in the early twentieth century - how to be true to oneself within a society whose values are expressly masculinist. As I hope to show in my chapter on Woolf her solution to this problem lay in emphasizing the importance of the internal, of the private over the public. This is not the classic Victorian ideological division of spheres of influence with the mother supposedly finding fulfilment in the home. It is rather an existential commitment to a notion of truth that means truth to oneself and that rejects the phoney values that masculine society imposes for ideologically repressive purposes.

If Woolf can be seen as placing the family within a patriarchal series that also includes the army, Oxbridge and the medical profession then Joyce can be seen as placing the family within a series of potential constraints on the freedom of the artist that would include religion, colonialism, and the parochialism of nationalism. My chapter on Joyce looks principally at how his use of language and form undermine the possibility of authority by demonstrating infinite interpretability thereby refuting the contention that any

one perspective can have privileged access to the truth. It is for this reason that so many voices figure in *Ulysses*. There is, there can be, no privileged textual position in the novel - the father is decentred. By the time of *Finnegans Wake* this plurality of voices doesn't just announce, but embodies the impossibility of the singular perspective from which authority derives its legitimacy.

In the following four author-specific chapters I will adopt what I consider to be a predominantly political perspective. I will be concerned primarily with questions of authority and freedom, of how the individual can live in society and how that society is ideologically constructed. Having said this I hope also to show how the form of texts and their language are freighted with political significance. It will be clear that several themes around the subject of the family run through the following chapters and I would like to briefly draw attention to them now.

Firstly, whilst bearing in mind that all four author chapters are characterised by a high level of ambivalence, each mourns to some degree the passing of the communal. It is usually taken as a staple of modernist interpretation, that the subjective vision supersedes the falsely totalising communality of realism. What these chapters show is the pronounced equivocation that attaches to this loss. For Conrad there is most to lament in the disappearance of the reinforcement of group solidarity, whilst Lawrence and Woolf are willing to rehearse types of individualism (the former an heroic Zarathustran self-assertion, the latter a kind of passive existential authenticity) as a solution to their sense of the deformative constraints of the communal. Finally, and perhaps surprisingly, Joyce in *Finnegans Wake* seems to re-elevate the communal by making the family the inescapable horizon of all human interaction whilst at the same time apparently articulating a prose economy beyond the restrictive authority of the father.

Connected with the movement above, one can also trace through this thesis from Conrad to Joyce, through Lawrence and Woolf, a narrative of the closure of the gap between the public and the private in which the family initially emerged in the nineteenth century as the problematic object of concern. For

Conrad there is a radical separation of these spheres whilst Lawrence apprehends the erasure of this gap and promotes its rigorous reinforcement along sexual lines. Woolf's analysis of patriarchy reveals the seepage of political discourse into the private domain of the family and the ideological ruse that maintains the purity of these realms. Finally Joyce closes the gap by encapsulating the whole history of mankind in the history of a family. In doing so he shuts down the possibility of fiction. In so far as the family formed the epistemic ground for the development of modernism because it mediated the contention between the public and the private, Joyce's collapsing of the one into the other in *Finnegans Wake* signals a limit-point for the novel.

The investigation of the family and the novel in the ensuing chapters will also focus on the gender politics of modernism. It is in its obsessive concern with gender issues, that modernism may be said to have pre-articulated many of the positions later adopted by feminist theory (Gilbert and Gubar 3: 369). However, this thesis rejects Gilbert and Gubar's assessment that male modernism represented an attempt to shore up a patriarchal privilege that was clearly under attack. They suggest (3: 391) that it was women writers who were reluctant to accept the family narrative. In fact, as I will show it was a problem that exercised the economy of modernism itself.

II

The Parameters of the Debate: The Relationship between the Individual and the Community in the Novels of Joseph Conrad

In this chapter I will aim to demonstrate a tension in Conrad's work between the nineteenth century belief that man finds his value by establishing himself at the heart of the community and the dawning modernist perception that the community is corrupt and that truth is something that the individual can only find for himself outside of communal structures. This chapter will chart how Conrad's work holds out the ideal of self-authorisation for his characters but is ultimately unable to envisage the possibility of securing a successful sense of self that does not derive its value from the reflection of the community or the family.

In general terms there appears to be an absence of depictions of the genetic family in Conrad's work, an absence which means his characters tend to confront society without the mediation of the family. In this respect Conrad's work can be read as containing little of the darkly destructive potentiality of the family that appears for example in Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' (1915) or in 'The Judgement' (1913) and that depends for its effect on an exploration of a chain of relations from the individual through the family to society. Conrad's characters have to be understood in a different way to the characters in the novels of the other writers studied in this thesis. Whereas in the works of Lawrence, Woolf, and Joyce it is often the case that *the struggle of their characters to fly by the ascriptive net of a residual genetic identity is an important aspect of the delineation of subjectivity*, Conrad's *works rarely present character* in this way. That is not to say that this is always the case. Axel Heyst in *Victory* (1915) and Charles Gould in *Nostromo* (1904) are clear examples of Conradian characters whose narratives are given direction and meaning, at least in part,

through their foundation in the relationship to the father. However, in general I think it is true to say that Conrad's novels are about identities being forged, rather than escaped from. His characters often appear to be searching for identity, an identity that can perhaps only finally be located in communal attachment.

There is, I think, a very powerful case for arguing that Conrad's work exposes the ontological insecurity of the individual in the absence of the family:

Heyst seemed to see the illusion of human fellowship on earth vanish before the naked truth of her existence, and leave them both face to face in a moral desert as arid as the sands of the Sahara, without restful shade, without refreshing water. (*Victory* 120)

It is the irony of Conrad's work that in pursuing connection to offset the perception that mankind is lonely in the world and alone, the object of this pursuit should so often be the vehicle for the destruction of the individual.

I wish now to qualify and complicate some of what I have written above. Although Conrad's work can appear to have little to say about the family, there is a strong argument to be made that his novels reveal no less an obsession with the family than that displayed by the other writers studied in this thesis; an obsession exposed not only through explorations of the genetic family itself, but also through the application of the metaphor of the family to other social structures. I would argue that where the genetic family appears in Conrad's work it is generally subject to the sort of negative attributions that are a common feature of the works of Lawrence, Woolf and Joyce. However, whilst these writers tend to extrapolate from this a critique of communal structures in toto, Conrad never divests himself of a nostalgic attachment to the value of the communal. His recognition of the failings of the family does not infect his view of all communal structures. Conrad does not perceive the imperfections of society as originating in the ideology of the contemporary family. Thus unlike in the early novels of Lawrence, and the works of Woolf, Conrad can contemplate positive relationships based on the structural model of the family.

I have already said that Conrad's novelistic orientation is primarily towards the construction of individual identities. It is this aspect of the family, rather than

the role it has to play in structuring society, upon which his novels focus. I have also said that where Conrad's work directly explores the dynamics of the genetic family then it is usually unrelentingly negative in its depiction. In *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent* (1907), *Chance* (1913), and *Victory*, where the genetic family appears, it is presented as operating primarily as a repressive institution, forcing an identity attribution that is patently false but that nevertheless exerts a strong influence on self-identity. One of the most striking instances of this destructive depiction of the family in Conrad's work appears in *Victory*, Conrad's last full-length novel. The book is subtitled 'an island tale' and explores Axel Heyst's flawed endeavour to live as an island divested of all external ties. Ironically this manner of existence has been bequeathed to Heyst through connection, connection to his father. This paternal inheritance to which Heyst is attached means that the attempt to be 'a masterpiece of aloofness' (194) is flawed at its incipience. In fact Heyst proves himself incapable of remaining detached from the world. He cannot suppress his instinct to help those in need. The critical moments of the novel are the points at which Heyst is tempted into action: he intervenes in the world first to save Morrison and later to save Lena.

The narrative concerning Morrison that appears near the beginning of the book provides a baldly presented statement of the dangers of the family to the existence of the individual: 'Finally he went into Dorsetshire to see his people, caught a bad cold, and died with extraordinary precipitation in the bosom of his appalled family' (72). In a novel concerned with the unravelling of paternal inheritance, this statement of the death-dealing consequences of proximity to the family provides a premonitory warning of the dangers of Heyst's attempt to live in the psychological image of his father. At the end of his writing life Conrad constructs in *Victory* a narrative which my reading would argue is typical of the shape of all his major work. Here then is a novel that is explicitly about the attempt to live the isolated life. Heyst's island self is a quest for a self-identity that is not reliant on the reflection of others for the derivation of its value. However, Heyst is from the very beginning tied into an inescapable network of connection. His very philosophy of disconnection is an expression of his relation to his father. Ultimately, if Conrad can be said to have a tragic

vision of life, it is revealed in *Victory* through the apparent impossibility of living outside of all communal structures. It is this orientation towards community and connection which is necessary for life and which leads in the end to destruction.

In *Beginnings* Edward Said makes a strong case for seeing the shadow of the father behind the apparently isolated figure of Charles Gould in *Nostromo*:

Charles Gould's naturalization is accomplished under urgent pressures. He grows up as a homeless Englishman in Europe who is hopelessly tied to a desperately angry father. Thousands of miles separate the boy and his father, and the boy grows into manhood with a need for attachment and purpose. Gould senior has been given the mine concession against his will as a payment for a loan and since the mine is sterile he wastes his life in frustration. Charles, however, becomes more interested in the mine at the same time as his father is being slowly killed by it. What for the father had been a bitter waste of effort is a challenge to the son's moral strength: not only will the mine vindicate his father's tenacity, but, it will also be the instrument of Costaguana's betterment. (111)

As Said's summary of Charles's relation to the mine shows, there is far more at stake here than material well-being. Charles is caught in a psychological narrative from which he cannot escape. If the mine can be said to drive the plot of *Nostromo* then, from Said's summary, it is clear that it is the relationship between the father and the son that drives the mine. Charles Gould, belonging 'nowhere as a young man and distanced from his father, seeks to overcome this paternal legacy by making the mine productive. In so doing he will simultaneously create, in Costaguana, the community of which he can legitimately claim to be a member. The novel does not, however, reach this resolution. Charles Gould links his identity too closely to the mine and is incapable of withstanding the corrupting forces it unleashes.

Conrad's novels therefore dramatise a quest for identity that is underpinned by a recognition that its social construction is finally more potent than anything the individual can achieve for himself. Indeed much of Conrad's work is concerned with the gap that exists between self and social identities and the consequences this has for textual representation. In this respect Conrad's work can be seen to articulate ideas about identity that bear some similarity to those presented in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). In that work Hegel argues that self-consciousness only exists for itself when it exists for another

(111), in other words there can be no identity that is not forged through relationship and community. Hegel's framework demands that institutions such as the family be taken into account when discussing the construction of identity.

It is important that one recognise this dimension of Conrad's work in order to avoid the sort of misreading that Martin Seymour-Smith is guilty of in his introduction to *Nostromo*. He describes Nostromo's sense of self as amounting to 'insane vanity' (19) whereas I think Conrad intends Nostromo's self-construction out of the good opinions of others to be far from extraordinary, to typify, in a way, the universal condition of mankind. In fact in his Author's Note to *Nostromo* (written in 1917) Conrad refers to Nostromo's 'manly vanity' (33) which seems to suggest something far more universal than is indicated by Seymour-Smith. The evidence for this reading can also be found in the existence of other characters in the novel whose identity is clearly dependent on its reflection through the eyes of others. In the case of Pedro Montero, for example, '...the firm attitude of Charles Gould who had not once, so far, pronounced the word "Excellency", diminished him in his own eyes' (341).

Clearly the family has a role to play in this generation of identity through the relation of the self to the other. R.D. Laing in *The Politics of the Family* describes the process by which individuals are ascribed identities within the family and the consequences for the psyche when this ascribed identity conflicts with the individual's sense of self. As I have already argued, working through the negative identity ascriptions of the genetic family is more characteristic of the narratives of Lawrence and Woolf than it is of Conrad. Conrad's novels tend to be more concerned with the agon that surrounds the possibility of self-creation in the abeyance of family authorisation. However, if the genetic family is often apparently absent from the equation creating identity in Conrad's work this does not mean that the individual is at liberty to forge his own identity. Conrad's work reveals the inescapability of the communal. The figure of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is Conrad's most appalled depiction of the consequences of the construction of identity through the reflected image of others. Marlow realises on his return to Brussels that Kurtz has no more reality than his reflection in the eyes of others, a perception that illuminates the

observation 'all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz' (207) which ties the politics of identity into the politics of colonialism.

Jacques Lacan's Hegelian formulation of the 'stade du miroir' in his psychoanalysis suggests a similar idea of the construction of identity to that which emerges out of Conrad's novels.¹ In Lacan's formulation of the mirror stage the child achieves mastery over the body, that is develops the sense of its integrity, through glimpsing its image. It identifies with the image of an other that represents totality, the 'mirror' most often being the mother. This idea can be applied to all object relations which involve a moment of identification. Lacan's formulation is then a statement of the utter inevitability of self-alienation. The child bases its sense of self on its identification with an other. It is this diremption of self and ego that undermines many of Conrad's characters, and in the cases of Lord Jim, Nostromo, Razumov and Heyst, it is their attempt to recover an authentic sense of self-identity that provides the plot of the novel and gives shape to their narratives.

In *Under Western Eyes* (1911), the very title of which suggests that identity is not a stable substance but depends on the perspective of the viewer, Razumov's lack of a 'domestic tradition' subjects him to a hopeless reactivity: 'the only ties I have in the world are social. I must get acknowledged in some way before I can act at all' (100). He spends most of his time, until his confession at the end of the novel, leading a kind of lie, alienated by the reflection of others from his own sense of being. In the absence of a genetic family Razumov regards the community, society, as securing his identity. Thus the revolutionary Haldin descends upon him because having no family he has nothing to risk by aiding the fugitive, whereas in fact Conrad makes clear that in the absence of any family context, the only way in which Razumov can construct his identity is through his relationship with society:

officially and in fact without a family...no home influences had shaped his opinions or his feelings. He was as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea. The word Razumov was the mere label of a solitary individuality. There were no Razumovs belonging to him

1. Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience' (1949) in *Ecrits: A Selection*.

anywhere. His closest parentage was defined in the statement that he was a Russian. Whatever good he expected from life would be given to or withheld from his hopes by that connection alone. (61)

When, in need of advice, Razumov does turn for support to the only vestiges of family that he has, to Prince K-, who the text hints may be his father, their interaction is conducted in public rather than private terms. Prince K-, literally represents the state, the state is Razumov's father. As Conrad says in his Author's Note on this novel (written in 1920): 'Being nobody's child he feels rather more keenly than another would that he is a Russian - or he is nothing. He is perfectly right in looking on Russia as his heritage' (50). Thus for Razumov the actions of the revolutionaries amount, almost literally, to patricide.

At first sight Razumov's politics of identity seem to run counter to those in the novel as a whole or to those of Conrad's work in general. Here the 'orphan', at least initially, appears to have a firm sense of his own identity which does not separate him from the community. However, like Nostromo, Razumov is guilty of subsuming the whole of his being to the demands of the community. The balance that Conrad seeks but that often seems to escape attainment is a self-identity that is premised on truth to the self but which at the same time is capable of achieving the security of social acceptance. The tragedy of Conrad's vision is that this orientation is generally regarded as an impractical expression of fatal idealism. In fact it is interesting to note how many of Conrad's novels have titles indicative of a negative sense of the individual being viewed from the outside: *An Outcast of the Islands*, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *Under Western Eyes*. It is fair to say that none of these titles is neutrally predicative, all point towards some kind of negative identity statement that can be made about the relationship between the individual and the community. In *Under Western Eyes*, for example, the idea that identity is a collaborative endeavour, that is generated inter-subjectively, is given the status of parable in the revolutionary, Peter Ivanovitch's story of his escape from imprisonment and his reabsorption into the ranks of humanity through the ministrations of a peasant woman:

It seemed as though he had lost the faculty of speech. He had become a dull and despairing brute, till the woman's sudden, unexpected cry of profound pity, the insight of her feminine compassion discovering the complex misery of the man under the terrifying aspect of the monster, restored him to the ranks of humanity. (150)

Conrad's use of the word 'restore' in this context suggests that until he is recognised as a man Peter Ivanovitch is indeed excluded from the ranks of humanity.

The idea then that Nostromo embodies an aberrant character type whose unassuageable vanity demands the acknowledgment of others is simply wrong. Rather he should be seen as a Conradian archetype, forging his ego on the basis of delusion and existing in discord with himself. This could hardly be more clearly marked than by Nostromo's name, mocked by Signora Teresa: 'What a name! What is that? Nostromo? He would take a name that is properly no word from them' (53). As a possession it is nothing, 'no word', it is a shifting symbol of a power relation that alters with each utterance and renders the spoils to the possessor. Nostromo's name is an expression of the socially directed nature of his identity, which accords with the fact that his value has been discovered by the community. As Captain Mitchell puts it: 'we owed our preservation to my Capataz de Cargadores, as they called him in the town, a man who, when I discovered his value, sir, was just the bos'n of an Italian ship...' (46). In accepting possession of the consignment of silver Nostromo stakes his life to protect his name. Whereas for Decoud removing the silver to safety is simply a political action whose accomplishment has no bearing on his identity, for Nostromo its success is entwined with his very identity, its failure therefore is the death of Nostromo and his accession into a new identity, Captain Fidanza. He is reborn as his own antithesis dominated now by the need to conceal himself, which reverses his former public, publicising persona.

Conrad quite deliberately deprives Nostromo of a name that would indicate any kind of attachment to a family lineage in the same way as he consciously deprives Nostromo of that lineage: 'He is a man with the weight of countless generations behind him and no parentage to boast of...Like the People' (Author's Note 33). In so far as a name ties an individual into a pre-existing cultural network, names can be a kind of entrapment dictating potentiality or ontological position. If Conrad's purpose through Nostromo is to demonstrate how identity is absorbed from the world not presented to it, then it is essential that Nostromo should appear as a natural force, owing no obligations, carrying

no family baggage. Perhaps Signora Teresa is wrong to castigate Nostromo for his name since all names are a signal of alienation, all names are imposed on the self from the outside. No-one can avoid the imposition of a name, an identity at the hands of the community. Axel Heyst's attempt in *Victory* to limit his identity to his paternal inheritance is revealed as flawed by the fact that he is known to others through a variety of nominal guises: 'Enchanted Heyst' (60); 'Hard Facts'; 'Utopist'; 'the spider' (71); 'Naive Heyst' (72); 'Heyst the enemy' (74); 'Hermit' (79); 'Number One' (202).

Given the political history of Poland, the fact that Conrad was largely brought up by his uncle, and his exposure to western colonialism, it is not surprising that all Conrad's major novels share a concern with the politics of identity. In *Nostromo*, *Lord Jim* and *Under Western Eyes* this concern is particularly emphasized. These three novels share a similar narratological movement. In all three the shedding of an identity from which the 'orphaned' protagonist is alienated leads towards a dangerous rapprochement with the institution of the family in which it is not the identity but the actual physical being of the protagonist that seems to be threatened. Indeed both Nostromo and Jim are killed by the 'fathers' in the families that they have infiltrated. These works reinforce the feeling discernible in *Victory* of the very real physical danger that resides in the family.

Under Western Eyes is particularly interesting in this regard since it sets up a whole network of surrogate families for the orphaned hero Razumov: Russia, the Haldins, the revolutionaries in Geneva, all of which are shown to be potentially dangerous. Michael Ragussis has noted how Razumov's search for identity, for a name, is hazardous insofar as it runs counter to the 'revolutionary plot' of the novel which promotes namelessness (235):

You may call me Tekla, then. My poor Andrei called me so. I was devoted to him. He lived in wretchedness and suffering, and died in misery. That is the lot of all us Russians, nameless Russians. There is nothing else for us, and no hope anywhere, unless...Unless all these people with names are done away with. (236-7)

Tekla's revolutionary fervour is directed at her father:

After I once understood the crime of the upper classes, I could not go on living with my parents. Not a single charitable word was to be heard in our home from year's end to year's end; there was nothing

but the talk of vile office intrigues, and of promotion and of salaries, and of courting the favour of the chiefs. The mere idea of marrying one day such another man as my father made me shudder. (170)

Tekla's revolutionary politics are reduced by Conrad to a reaction against the sterile bourgeois values of her family and a blind hatred for 'Ministries' (170). In fact, as Tekla herself admits, having identified salvation as lying outside the family in the realm of the nameless she has been able to do nothing to advance the cause of revolution. Having escaped the family she has been caught in a plot of unstinting 'familial' devotion. Far from avoiding the servile fate of the nineteenth-century housewife, Tekla's masochistic self-sacrifice initially for the young lithographer, Andrei, who dies, and latterly for the tyrannous Peter Ivanovitch would make her seem ideally suited to the demands of the nineteenth-century family. If Ragussis sees this constructive losing of one's name as the novel's 'revolutionary plot' the example of Tekla reminds us that it is also the female plot of western society.

Conrad's work pays a great deal of attention to the ramifications of the loss of name. If it can form the basis of a revolutionary and a female plot it is also in *Lord Jim* the foundation of a quest narrative. One of the significant aspects of this narrative is the fact that the quest is the existential search for identity rather than the nineteenth-century attempt to recover the true familial origins of the hero. The story of Jim is the story of an individual winning back his 'name' augmented by the title that signifies his utter trustworthiness based on the infallibility of his word. He wins back his name through a process of renaming and reauthoring that disconnects him from the family narrative. He is 'Lord Jim', creation starts with him and he is abstracted from the causal chain of paternal succession. However, this nominal self-sufficiency is an illusion, he cannot divorce himself from the chain of affiliation which connects him with Gentleman Brown. Brown's monolithic paternal identity ascription (repeated frequently in the figures of Conrad's criminals) appears as Jim's antithesis, it is the overemphasis of the paternal in contradistinction to Jim's underemphasis. It reflects the haunting suspicion that the family narrative is the inescapable fate of the novel, the bad father will undermine the son who tries to break free. Ultimately Brown appeals to Jim on the basis of the quasi-religious ecumenicism of original sin, the brotherhood of fallen man:

I've lived - and so did you, though you talk as if you were one of those people that should have wings so as to go about without touching the dirty earth. Well - it is dirty. I haven't got any wings. I am here because I was afraid once in my life. (326)

Jim of course does not have wings which is why his leap from the *Patna* brought him crashing to earth. Brown makes it not only hypocritical but arrogant for Jim to judge him.

Jim's encounter with Brown can be read as an example of the classic Conradian subversion by the community (or the appeal to community) of the individual's attempt at self-assertion. The confrontation between these two elements: the self-assertion of the individual and the inescapable potency or greater reality of the community, is felt in the work of all four writers studied in this thesis. It brings into conflict what, in a very general sense, can be considered the opposition between the modernist and the nineteenth-century world views. Whereas literary modernism endorses a Nietzschean emphasis on the individual, nineteenth-century novels tend to reveal an Hegelian commitment to the truth and value of the communal. This question then of whether the identity of the subject is the product of his familial, social or cultural background or is something that he is free to construct for himself goes to the heart of the modernist dialogue with the nineteenth century. However, this dialogue is by no means straightforward. Hegel's argument that the whole has more reality than the parts and therefore in society that the group (the family, the community, the state) has more reality than its constitutive individuals is one with which I think Conrad has a great deal of sympathy. Like Joyce, Conrad wants to be able to accommodate the ideal of the communal into what is often a pessimistic view of society. On the other hand the opposition to the family expressed in the works of both Lawrence and Woolf translates into an opposition to all communal structures and a, perhaps idealistic, assertion of the capacity of the individual to free himself from the dictates of social impositions.

In many novels of the nineteenth century the family is presented as the primary expression of a reality greater than the individual. Maggie Tulliver's death entwined with her brother Tom in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) is a powerful

illustration of this point, highlighting the ideological gulf separating this work from the productions of modernism. In the nineteenth century it was possible to read this ending as some kind of satisfying resolution - the heroine reabsorbed into the communal embrace of the family. In fact I would go so far as to say that one is led to read the work in that way:

The boat reappeared - but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted - living through again in one supreme moment, the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together. (655)

To the modern, post-Lawrence reader, *The Mill on the Floss* appears as tragic in its elevation of false and conservative communal principles over the dynamic and uncontrollable life-affirming spirit of individualism. That its final scene of family reconciliation can in any sense be viewed as positive is a position, I think, demolished by the dissemination in the early twentieth century of psychoanalytical ideas. For Dickens the family is good or bad according to the manner of its husbandry of resources. It is not the intrinsic site of danger that it is for later writers. Dickens would not have been able to conceive negatively a loving family that was not in penury. In fact his novels often progress towards this ideal denouement. For the writers in this thesis, however, familial love can, quite obviously, be a bad thing. Indeed if modernism succeeds in the Nietzschean endeavour to secure the revaluation of values then one of its achievements is to reverse the siting of truth from the communal to the individual. A repositioning that has enormous consequences for the authority of the family.

At this point we need to examine in more detail the political implications of the concepts of 'communalism' and 'individualism' and how these ideas link into Conrad's understanding of the role and position of the family.

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) Hegel sets out his belief that history had reached its end in the modern German state because it realised the ideal of freedom in its unity of the subjective and the objective, the congruence of the free choice of the individual and the needs of society. This was due to his conception of individual freedom as residing in conformity to the society of an organic community; a harmony between private interest and communal values.

One can see quite clearly how the family could absorb such ideas into its ideological make-up. In fact, whether they depended on Hegel or not, nineteenth century apologists for the family, such as Ruskin, clearly viewed its strength as embodied in its elaboration of 'universal' values through its channeling of self-interest. Women were repeatedly told, as in this example from an article in the *Fortnightly Review* from 1891, that their power to influence from the home meant that, notwithstanding their exclusion from public life, they were the true guardians of society: 'The true function of women is to educate not children only, but men, to train to a higher civilization not the rising generation but the actual society' (Harrison 452). This was a way of validating the family not only by appeal to the arid notion of duty but through emphasis on the enormous power that women could exercise within its bounds.

The extent to which Hegel's commitment to the incorporation of the individual into the greater glory of the communal runs counter to the tenor of modernism can be demonstrated by looking at his valorisation of the capitalist mode of production in the *Philosophy of Right*:

By this division [the division of labour in the capitalist production process], the work of the individual becomes less complex, and consequently his skill at his section of the job increases, like his output. At the same time, this abstraction of one man's skill and means of production from another's completes and makes necessary everywhere the dependence of men on one another and their reciprocal relation in the satisfaction of their other needs...

When men are thus dependent on one another and reciprocally related to one another in their work and the satisfaction of their needs, subjective self-seeking turns into a contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of everyone else. That is to say, by a dialectical advance, subjective self-seeking turns into the mediation of the particular through the universal, with the result that each man in earning, producing, and enjoying on his own account is *eo ipso* producing and earning for the enjoyment of everyone else... (129; paras. 198-99)

Conrad, alone amongst the modernists studied in this thesis, does at times concede this concept of mutual dependence as a model for society in which each individual action has a critical impact on the overall success of any particular endeavour. *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, for example, is quite explicitly concerned with examining the threat to the community that arises when a component fails to function as part of an integrated unit. In fact the value that Conrad insists on with regard to the community is very clearly

derived from his perception of the realities of maritime life. He knows that a ship functions through the creation of a community of self-interest and that the very existence of that community is threatened by the manifestation of any form of individualism or questioning of that truth.

Conrad seems to accept, in an echo of Hegel's valorisation of capitalist production, that the ideal mode of existence lies in the integration of the interests of the individual with those of the community and that this integration can be achieved at sea. For this reason Conrad has been accused by critics such as Georg Lukács in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (71) of betraying a tacit acceptance of capitalism and of lacking historical awareness. Lukács's argument is important because the merchant marine was the foundation of British Imperialism in the nineteenth century and he certainly has a point about Conrad's idealized presentation of this institution:

The men walking about the deck were healthy and contented - as most seamen are, when once well out to sea. The true peace of God begins at any spot a thousand miles from the nearest land. (*The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* 31)

However I do think it is misleading to generalise Conrad's politics from his depiction of the sea in this early novel. Furthermore, Conrad can hardly be accused of a naive idealism since *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* tackles head on the questions of individualism, egalitarianism and the rights of labour. It is significant I think that Conrad makes it plain in this novel that the ocean should be seen as a privileged arena in which the political dynamics of society are sacrificed before 'the austere servitude of the sea' (11). The maritime is another world 'the ship, a fragment detached from the earth, went on lonely and swift like a small planet' (29). This is not a strategy of ideological containment so much as a closing down of perspective in order to intensify the signifying potential of the text.

At the level of content the text does seem to reinforce a naively conservative defence of hierarchy in which the apostate voice of Donkin is all but dehumanised. However the form of the text itself, its lack of an authoritative register in its juxtaposing of competing discourses suggests a somewhat more complex apprehension of power relations. Bruce Henricksen argues that the

form of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* subverts the apparent ideology of the novel through the progressive breakdown of the narrative into three distinct voices: 'we', 'they', 'I': 'in narratological terms, the *story* of the narrator's separation undermines his *discourse* of solidarity' (40). In other words, the apparent emphasis on solidarity is surely severely undermined when the vehicle for that message adopts a solidarity of convenience.

This narrative illustrates the tension in Conrad's work between the desire to hold onto a familial model of society and the realisation that this cannot be maintained in tandem with the emerging force of individualism. I will argue later that Conrad's tragic vision is based on a simultaneous conviction that the community, understood in familial terms, is the source of all strength and value and that such community is, however, rarely, if ever, attainable. The narrator of *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* emphasizes the cardinal virtue of solidarity but at the same time distinguishes himself from the rest of the crew when he considers they have been duped: 'He [Donkin] knew how to conquer the naive instincts of the crowd. In a moment they gave him their compassion...' (12). He associates himself with the crew for the purposes of heroic endeavour, for example during the storm in which the crew battle the elements:

About half-past seven the pitchy obscurity around us turned a ghastly grey, and we knew that the sun had risen. This unnatural and threatening daylight, in which we could see one another's wild eyes and drawn faces, was only an added tax on our endurance. (55)

However, by the end of the novel no substantial bond has been forged, the narrator certainly doesn't conclude on a note of solidarity:

I disengaged myself gently. Belfast's crying fits generally ended in a fight with someone, and I wasn't anxious to stand the brunt of his inconsolable sorrow...

"So long!" I said, and went on my way. (171)

The significance of this breakdown in narrative voice from the communal to the individualistic lies in its suggestion that the idea of the whole integrating its constitutive parts in the construction of communities perhaps exists only at the level of ideological fantasy. The form of this narrative then, in the context of this thesis, suggests a discursive antifamilialism. In itself it could be read as an expression of the exploitativeness of capitalistic relations - a profoundly atomistic and self-serving philosophy is exposed by this narrative evangelism

for values that the narration itself does not share. In *Victory*, *The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes*, *Nostromo*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Almayer's Folly* Conrad reveals an obsession with the interaction between the self and society that often focuses on the brutal instrumentality that seeps into personal relations from the political-economic sphere and that gives the lie to the notion of his political ingenuousness or naive complicity.

It is in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche that the anti-communitarian force of individualism receives its most compelling expression. Conrad was by no means the most philosophically self-conscious writer amongst his contemporaries, for example David Thatcher's book *Nietzsche in England* contains no reference to Conrad, likewise the standard biography by Jocelyn Baines mentions not a single philosopher in its index. However, what placing Conrad's works in this context reveals is that their concern with the human condition was saturated in the obsessions of the time (all Nietzsche's major works were being translated into English 1895-1911, during Conrad's early writing career, and most of the works were available earlier in French). There are of course innumerable contexts in which Conrad's works could be placed. What the philosophical context of this chapter reveals is the inescapability of the individual/general debate for a discussion of the novel and the family.

Nietzsche's work provides a vivid desecration of the sanctity of the community. *Ecce Homo* (1888), for instance, is a bitter attack on the community as nation, on Germany and its culture: 'It is even part of my ambition to count as the despiser of the German *par excellence* ...Whenever I picture to myself a type of man that goes against all my instincts it always turns into a German' (93). In *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-92) the transformation of peoples into states is described as being abhorrent: 'the state is the coldest of all cold monsters' (75). Zarathustra sees in it the sickly gathering of the 'superfluous', the 'many too many', the people who inhabit the state are apes, madmen, bile-vomiting destroyers, they are the pungent and the filthy (77). Man can only be free where the state ceases. This vehement attack on contemporary political society not only feeds the attitudes of much modernist thought but also, in its expression of alienation from the state, describes the condition of many

modernist writers. Lawrence is a rejector of modern culture, a fugitive to Mexico; Joyce escapes the stifling atmosphere of Dublin, following the advice of Zarathustra, 'better to break the window and leap into the open air' (77); Woolf is divorced from the state because of her sex; Conrad is an exile from an already politically alienated state.

Nietzsche rejected the regulation of individual insight or experience by the community. He sees all social structures: families, institutions, commonwealths as battle grounds of the sick against the well, the former being generally the most aggressive (*Genealogy of Morals* 272). Nietzsche was not, however, an implacable opponent of the communal, only its disabled manifestation in the modern world. Certainly he was well aware that the Übermensch could not exist except amongst his peers. Isolated in society he would be a monster. To some extent Conrad shares this insight. Kurtz is the manifestation of this nightmare and indeed as David Thatcher points out, early Nietzscheans like John Davidson were inclined to interpret the Superman as a type of the Imperialist (75). The ideal of the group is promoted in Nietzsche's early work in the dionysiac frenzy of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) in which man becomes one with his fellows as a member of a 'higher community' (23). Thus Nietzsche's promotion of individualism (which according to Thatcher was how he was primarily read in England) was connected to his rejection of the Hegelian idea of 'organic community' which he found a problematic notion in the face of the onslaught of industrialisation and capitalism.

Following Nietzsche then there are clearly two strands in the modernist confrontation with the idea of community. At one level, as exemplified by Conrad (and perhaps in tune with Nietzsche's early work), there is a response to the idea that the harmonious social whole has been corrupted so that the community no longer exists as a universal good and thus the onus is on the individual to forge his own identity in the face of the fragmentation of universal standards. This is not a rejection of the communal, it is an apprehension that its coherence is threatened and a suggestion, in Conrad at least, that its last bastion is the merchant marine. On the other hand there is the response of *Zarathustra* and of Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* which is that society

persists with shared values but that these values, precisely because they embrace the group, are naturally hostile to the individual who should not compromise to accommodate their false morality.

If Conrad is pessimistic about the fracturing of the communal ideal, often the direction this pessimism takes is the perception that the group tie remains in place, is perhaps even inescapable, but that it is this very aspect of society that is its most corrupting and oppressive dimension. Both Jim and Heyst are undone after all by 'the envoys of the outer world' (*Victory* 318).

Despite his recognition of its often soiled nature in the modern world Conrad retains a commitment to the communal (which can perhaps give his work a somewhat conservative air). This commitment to the communal, imaged in terms of the family, receives its fullest (although as we have seen not wholly uncomplicated) expression in his presentation of the British merchant marine. In *A Personal Record* (1912) Conrad responds to the charge of 'cosmopolitanism' levelled at him by Robert Lynd,² a charge that would place Conrad in the same rootless condition as Decoud in *Nostromo*. It is true that Conrad rebuts the charge by reference to his family and his memories of life on the fringes of the Polish aristocracy, but of far greater significance is his insistence on his enculturation, his embeddedness in the traditions of the sea which firmly establish his cultural rootedness. That this represents a surrogate family is borne out through the text by references to the merchant service as 'my only home' (xiv); to his 'almost filial regard' for that world (30); to his feelings during his seamanship examination that the examiner is 'an ancestor' (118); and to his revelation on passing his examination that 'I felt adopted' (118).

It is unnecessary to detail all the instances in which life at sea is seen by Conrad or his narrators as an ideal type of the family, a form of relationship that can anchor being and secure self-identity. *The Shadow-Line* (1917) certainly

2. The attack came in *The Daily News* August 10th, 1908. See Zdzislaw Najder, xiv.

seems to adopt this perspective as the new young captain begins to establish his sense of self:

I stared back at myself with the perfect detachment of distance, rather with curiosity than with any other feeling, except of some sympathy for this latest representative of what for all intents and purposes was a dynasty; continuous not in blood, indeed but in its experience, in its training, in its conception of duty, and in the blessed simplicity of its traditional point of view on life. (53)

When Mr Burns appeals to the captain to take him on board with the statement: "You and I are sailors" the narrator, who is also the captain in the story, glosses this with: 'That was quite a claim, for I had no other family' (70). This perspective amounts to a subversion of the family narrative as it would have been understood in the nineteenth century. In *Oliver Twist* (1837-8) for instance, the family plot, genealogy, provides the explanation for the apparent workings of fate. This deep and inescapable filiation as the motive force for the generation of plot is replaced in Conrad's works by the affective familialism of the sea. The genetic family is not the secret key to the plot but is replaced by an associative relationship based on chance and implying no greater connection than a shared set of professional values. A striking instance of this subversion of the traditional family narrative occurs in the opening pages of *Chance* where the narrator Powell gets his berth (birth), secures his worldly position, through the application of this subverted, associational family narrative. The shipping master, who shares the same name, passes him off as a relative. The family 'Powell' has no substance since the narrator is an orphan, but the maritime family into which Powell is now absorbed fills this gap. The determinism of the family narrative is replaced by the post-Darwinian elevation of chance.

If Charles Powell's advance is prompted by the fabrication of a family connection this does not mean that Conrad upholds the material institution of the family as a model for social relations or as the most fertile ground for the production of individual subjectivity. Where Conrad talks about the family in relation to the sea he means, I think, to refer to the application of the ideology of the family and not to the institution itself. For example, *Chance* is full of dysfunctional families that certainly do not promote the harmonious integration of self-interest and communal endeavour. There is, for example, the family of

the tyrannical poet Carleon Anthony whose legacy has blighted the emotional life of both his son and daughter:

The late Carleon Anthony, the poet, sang in his time of the domestic and social amenities of our age with a most felicitous versification...But in his domestic life that same Carleon Anthony showed traces of the primitive cave-dweller's temperament. (31)

It is hardly surprising, given their upbringing, that neither Captain Anthony nor his sister, Mrs Fyne, are able to achieve for themselves the family life of nineteenth-century myth. The history of Flora de Barral likewise is a history of deficient familialisation. Not only does her father abandon her, discredit her name by getting himself incarcerated, and then work poisonously to split her from her husband, but she is also the victim of domestic intrigue when she is ejected from the Hamburg home where she has been working as a governess because she is the innocent victim of the father of that household's sexual advances.

Chance is generally regarded as a sentimental work because of its happy ending, the final pairing of the two 'orphans' Charles Powell and Flora Anthony. However, along the way it exposes Conrad's deep mistrust of the possibility of finding any communal structure that might give larger meaning to man's lonely struggle with existence. Indeed throughout Conrad's work so pronounced is this mistrust of the communal (notwithstanding the fact that, as I have already argued, Conrad would dearly love to embrace its moral power) that it is often only the form of Conrad's text itself that upholds this principle of communality.

In *The Secret Agent*, Conrad's most unrelieved assault on the possibility of the communal, it is only the text itself that provides a countervailing force to the atomistic society presented in the novel's content. The text's irony not only acts as a binding, unifying agent against the forces of division that appear in the novel, but it also suggests a community of values shared with the reader. Irony in *The Secret Agent* announces a community of vision even at the same time as the text destroys the vision of community. If Conrad's depiction were a true reflection of society, if indeed there existed no community in any real sense for the writer to appeal to, then Conrad would be deprived of the possibility of communication. His books would be akin to the confessions of Michaelis:

He talked to himself, indifferent to the sympathy or hostility of his hearers, indifferent indeed to their presence...He was no good in discussion, not because any amount of argument could shake his faith, but because the mere fact of hearing another voice disconcerted him painfully, confusing his thoughts at once - these thoughts that for so many years, in a mental solitude more barren than a waterless desert, no living voice had ever combated, commented, or approved. (45)

The fear of this fate haunts Conrad's work and feeds his theoretical commitment to the communal. However, *The Secret Agent* itself presents a host of examples where the group ideal is subverted by the eccentricity of the individual. Nowhere is the positively communal endorsed as successfully embodied: professionally, in the case of the police force, both Heat and the Assistant Commissioner supervene departmental procedures and act in conflict and an atmosphere of mutual hostility and suspicion; politically, there is no coherence between the anarchists as is obvious in the meeting between Ossipon and the Professor; familially, the novel describes an absolute lack of communication between husband and wife (both in the case of the Verlocs and the Assistant Commissioner) and in the inverted logic of the book the desire of the mother to keep the family together persuades her to disconnect herself from it; sexually, Ossipon represents the alienated exploitation and predatory reification of the other that might be seen to stamp the revolutionary with the hallmark of the capitalist. The list could be continued in which the prospect of communal relations is held out and then destroyed. Ultimately the failure of all other group structures in the novel takes one back to the narrative itself, the carapace of the text, in order to discover the binding that enables the integration of the disparate and disharmonious. Even here, however, the irony of the novel introduces a fundamental bifurcation between what people do and say and what they are. What weaves the text together formally, at the same time exposes the cleavage between the public and the private which is a key theme of the novel.

I have already stated my belief that the family provided the metaphorical model which structured nineteenth and early twentieth century conceptions of the communal. *The Secret Agent* is the *terminus ad quem* of Conrad's exploration of this idea. The extreme irony of Conrad's novel, which describes Mr Verloc

after his marriage as cultivating his 'domestic virtues' (15) and Winnie and Stevie's mother as feeling that she can relax her maternal vigilance:

Her son-in-law's heavy good nature inspired her with a sense of absolute safety. Her daughter's future was obviously assured, and even as to her son Stevie she need have no anxiety...in view...of Mr Verloc's kind and generous disposition, she felt that the poor boy was pretty safe in this rough world. (17)

is ultimately given a vicious pay off. The ensuing 'domestic drama' (181) leads to the obliteration of Stevie, the murder by his wife of Mr Verloc, and the suicide of Winnie. At this point it is fair to say that Conrad has buried the nineteenth-century image of the family.

It is an important part of the argument of this thesis that the structure of the modernist text, as much as its content, is responsible for carrying the weight of its critique of the family. Georg Lukács's famous attack on the ethics of modernism, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (1958), can usefully be drawn on to consider this point. Lukács argues that modernism gives rise to 'an epic structure which is *static*, reflecting a belief in the basically static character of events' (17). I would argue that Lukács's viewpoint is wrong because it ignores the structural revolutionariness of modernist texts. What Lukács objects to is not so much an absence of motion but rather a lack of purposive direction in modernist works (a family plot); the replacement of Hegelian teleology by the Darwinian blind force of natural selection, the reduction of the generation of narrative to Joyce's 'instant of blind rut' (*Ulysses* 171) or Conrad's 'chance'. Modernist novels wield these weapons to stave off the classical familial cycle of progress through repetition. Indeed there is in literary modernism, a strong emphasis on 'rebirth',³ autochthonous generation that promises an escape from filiation altogether, 'One is least related to one's parents: it would be the most extreme sign of vulgarity to be related to one's parents' (*Ecce Homo* 11). This desire to shed the past, to escape the chains of filiation is strongly expressed in the works of Lawrence and Woolf. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) it is the *sine qua non* of the life of the artist. Conrad's texts are far more ambivalent about this process of shedding the past, the idea that the true self can only emerge when it has become free of all

external entanglements. The example of Kurtz is testimony to the dangers of 'freeing' oneself from all external ties and systems. However, as *The Secret Agent* shows, Conrad increasingly came to see all forms of genetic connection as fatally flawed.

The rejection of the authoritarianism of the genetic, dynastic connection means that modernist works increasingly investigate the significance of lateral connectedness. In *Beginnings* Edward Said elaborates on the idea that modernist texts no longer operate through genetic connection but have replaced this principle with the concept of adjacency:

The true relationship is by adjacency, while the dynastic relationship is almost always the one treated ironically, the one scoffed at, toyed with, or rejected. Therefore, the production of meaning within a work has had to proceed in entirely different ways from before, if only because the text itself stands to the side of, next to, or between the bulk of all other works - not in a line with them, nor in a line of descent from them. (10)

What is averred here is a conception of the text that does not see it as sufficient unto itself. Its meanings are based on relationships that are not genetic (familial, based on biology) but lateral (structural, based on architecture). The possibility that meaning might seep out of the spaces between texts, rather than being fully consciously transparent within a single text, marks an epistemological shift away from the evolutionary hermeneutics of the nineteenth century towards the structural explanatory paradigms of the twentieth century. Clearly then the tension between the individual and the general that this thesis is investigating in relation to the family has a metatextual dimension. The individual text is no longer internally sufficient. Its meanings can only be established in dialogue or by transference.

Modernism therefore demands a critical reading in which individual texts are not considered as isolated self-sufficient entities but in dialogue with other texts. I would argue that this form of reading is one that is promoted in modernist works and would suggest that this is both a defence for my own practice of reading the oeuvre of the writers in this thesis as a text and at the same time a further

3. This is the way in which in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche images the resolution of the crucial personal crisis he passed through in 1880.

illustration of modernism's attack on the family through a negation of the self-bounded identity structure of that institution. In his introduction to *Lord Jim* Cedric Watts points to the crucial role that publishing history plays in the reception of a work and it is undeniably the case that the proliferation of early collected editions of Conrad promotes the transtextual notion that, for example, Jim can only be fully understood with reference to Almayer, Kurtz, Decoud, Haldin, and Powell. Obviously the position of Marlow endorses this idea that the revelation of meaning is not contained within the individual work but is produced by the oeuvre, by a general connectedness that the novels themselves interrogate. Of course there are nineteenth century novel series in which connections are made across a writer's oeuvre. I would argue, however, that unlike Zola's Rougon-Macquart novels (1871-93) this modernist exploitation of intertextuality does not operate genetically for the purposes of tracing the unfolding of a dynastic inheritance, normally a degenerative trait. Nor does it operate like Balzac's *Comedie Humaine* (1827-47) for the purpose of presenting a snap-shot of a whole society at a particular historical moment. In both these structures individual works represent integral elements in a larger project. They can be read as integrating the particular into the greater reality of the general.

The connections to be drawn across Conrad's oeuvre do not operate in the same way but rather serve to intensify key themes and ideas and expand on their ramifications. It is for that reason that Conrad originally wanted *Lord Jim* in a single volume alongside 'Youth' (1902) and *Heart of Darkness*:

"Youth" would establish the theme of the volume...in its account of an imaginative young Englishman voyaging to the Orient and experiencing an ironic contrast between romantic dreams and harsher realities. *Heart of Darkness* would tell of an imaginative and resourceful European who, in an African outpost, would become corrupt and debased. *Lord Jim* would offer a counterpoint to *Heart of Darkness*: again, an imaginative European would become a trader in a foreign outpost, but this time the adventure would be apparently redemptive: he would atone for past disgrace and largely vindicate his romantic aspirations. In all three tales, Marlow would be prominent as narrator and interpreter. (Introduction to *Lord Jim* 17)

In the same way that an Impressionist painting continues beyond its frame the modernist text demands to be seen as signifying beyond its specific boundary. What this amounts to is a rejection of the ideological attempt of institutions like

the family to define finite limits of signification. I would argue, to return to Lukács's objection that the modernist universe is static, that the breakdown of the familial hierarchy in the modernist novel means that subjectivity is constructed horizontally rather than vertically: in other words, that one is encouraged to understand Jim through understanding Powell or Kurtz or Razumov rather than by exploring his genealogical heritage. This does not mean that the modernist universe is static but that modernist texts do not necessarily construct temporality in terms of historical progression.

Lukács argues that this modernist negation of History traps the individual in his own experience through depriving the work of a general perspective. Modernist man is thus:

“thrown-into-the-world” meaninglessly, unfathomably. He does not develop through contact with the world; he neither forms nor is formed by it. The only “development” in this literature is the gradual revelation of the human condition. Man is now what he has always been and always will be. The narrator, the examining subject, is in motion; the examined reality is static. (1963, 21)

Notwithstanding the question of whether this ‘throwness-into-the-world’ is a modernist characteristic or is indeed one of the ‘special conditions’ for the generation of all narrative fiction which as Said suggests is full of ‘orphans, outcasts, parvenus, emanations, solitaires, and deranged types whose background is either rejected, mysterious, or unknown’ (92), it is a highly problematic argument that maintains that because a character’s genetic links with society are severed then somehow he is precluded from engaging with the institutions, structures, and ideology of that society. One might indeed argue that it is this very absence of connection that allows the modernist text to explore the dynamics of its society far more radically than the classic texts of nineteenth century realism which Lukács approves. What he really objects to is the challenge that modernism poses to History as the authoritative principle governing narrative interpretation. *Heart of Darkness* for instance challenges any straightforward attempt to align history with progress. The chapter on Woolf will examine the extent to which History can be regarded as an element in the arsenal of patriarchal repression.

The family is at the crux of this debate because it constructs progress as cyclical repetition. In 'On Repetition' Edward Said argues that:

Narrative fiction during the European eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is based on the filial device of handing on a story through narrative telling; moreover...the generic plot situation of the novel is to repeat through variation the family scene by which human beings engender human duration in their action... (1984, 117)

For modernist writers it is precisely this repetitious aspect of the family narrative that appears to limit the freedom of the individual and that demands to be destroyed. For example, the key emblem in Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, pointing to the negation of historicity, is the 'family genie' of the Guermantes which if universally applied promotes the idea of a nation at all times consisting of the same people. It destroys the possibility of either narrative or existential freedom. It is this Platonic immobility of the family and its inescapability to which modernists object.

In throwing off an overarching explanatory paradigm, whether it be history or the family (or indeed history imaged as the family), the modernist text is forced to encounter its own structure, to construct the pattern of its own meaning and therefore to raise fundamental questions about the way in which structure is itself productive of meaning. Modernism as a discourse is unable to countenance the monologistic explanatory paradigm offered by Lukács in the form of History. Multiple perspectives are often employed precisely to preclude the possibility of a dominant narrative that could be compared with the authoritarian structure of the occupying country or the patriarchal dominance of the father in the family. In *Nostromo* the textuality of history is revealed through the proliferation of competing narratives all of which articulate part of the whole and that make Mitchell's position as self-appointed official historian a ludicrous one. It is this polylogical textuality that betrays the hollowness of the identity ascriptions of the family. Heyst is undermined in *Victory* by his monological paternal socialisation, his flawed attempt to accord with the isolationist philosophy of his father. Just as Mitchell's discourse is insufficient to describe the history of a state, which is literally the history of many individuals, so too the monological discourse of Heyst's father imposes a deformative one-dimensionality on Heyst that is problematised by the fact that he is 'temperamentally sympathetic' (113).

My argument in this chapter is that Conrad gestures towards the idealisation of community or communality but is unable to conceive of a successful embodiment of this ideal (away from the sea) in a fallen world. In terms of how this vision fits in with my understanding of the position of the other writers in this thesis I would argue that the modulations of this debate are contained by the developments, in opposite directions, of the works of Lawrence and Joyce.

In the case of *Lawrence* it is possible to identify in the early work a communal vision which becomes increasingly subsumed under an aggressive individualism stressing man's apartness, his isolation and the need for self-containment. This movement is reflected in the language of the narration from the polylogical/communitarian, to the subsumption of all difference under the authority of a doctrinaire Lawrentian discourse through which can be glimpsed the Nietzschean insistence on instability and flux at the expense of the Platonic essence that is often the ideological inscription of the family.

Joyce's orientation is almost diametrically opposed to Lawrence's. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* he has the avowed aim of avoiding communal structuration, of flying by the nets of nation, family, and religion. The artist is considered to be a type of the superman who alone is capable of attempting this abstraction. By the time of *Ulysses*, as is indicated by the title of the novel, individualism is vitiated as a possibility and correspondence, lateral/horizontal connection becomes the structural framework of the narrative. Finally in *Finnegans Wake*, the plurality of the title indicates the destruction of the very possibility of singularity. The whole of human history is contained within the family and within the book by a structure of time that will not allow the disjunction out of which the individual forges his identity, but instead stresses a circular continuity in which every event is a repetition.

The family then is seen in a similar way in the early works of Lawrence and in the late works of Joyce, as having a role to play in promoting the continuity of society and the transmission of tradition. As an ideological structure the family conveys identity on the basis of being inside or outside, depending on the

degree to which values, outlook, and behaviour accord with the standards of the family. Conrad's presentation of the merchant marine testifies to the way in which this metaphor of familialism extends into all areas of society. Throughout his work Conrad reveals that absorption into the family of the sea denotes the construction of oppositional categories, of insider and outsider, on which identity is anchored. Lord Jim for example is 'one of us'. Elsewhere Conrad talks of the bond of the sea and in his final Marlovian narrative, *Chance*, Charles Powell establishes right at the outset an opposition between sea-fairers and 'the shore gang' (4):

"If we at sea," he declared, "went about our work as people ashore high and low go about theirs we should never make a living. No one would employ us. And moreover no ship navigated and sailed in the happy-go-lucky manner people conduct their business on shore would ever arrive into port. (3-4)

Incorporation into the family obviously imposes duties and moral obligations on those who are 'one of us'. Perhaps more significantly the family works on the basis of exclusion. It is a form of categorisation that contains within itself the seeds of a hostile universe.

There is the potential for a fundamental contradiction here that Conrad's depiction of Lord Jim reveals. In fact one could go so far as to say that Jim can be read as an avatar of the modernist artist. Thrown into a family, the merchant marine, Jim's character is fixed by his membership of that group. Its traditions become his traditions despite the fact that he has done nothing to warrant ownership of such a culture. His defection from the status of 'one of us' is shocking because it reveals the hollowness and purely ideological status of the bond of the sea. The modernist writer likewise might feel in constructing his text that he has entered a family with traditions and a culture that are not his own. In forging a new path, in outraging the conventions of the merchant marine or the novel and giving up the status of being known, understood, 'one of us', both Jim and Conrad are left without the ballast of the family, risking isolation and even hostility in order to discover their own truths.

I do not wish to oversimplify this modernist movement away from the family because as I have already shown Conrad, for example, was attentive to the dangers inherent in its jettisoning. Whilst transcendence of one's social context

may be the route to existential liberty, Conrad's pessimistic philosophy of human nature raises in the figure of Kurtz the spectre of man unbalanced through an excess of freedom consequent upon the removal of all inhibiting communal structures:

You can't understand. How could you? - With solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you...how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude - utter solitude without a policeman - by the way of silence - utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion? (*Heart of Darkness* 206)

Conrad could hardly position himself further at this point from the liberty philosophy of modernist individualists like Lawrence for whom the concept of the check of the 'kind neighbour' and 'public opinion' are precisely the mediocratising forces he seeks to escape. Conrad understands that the choices of each individual define humanity and that in kicking 'himself loose of the earth' (234) Kurtz has in reality 'kicked the very earth to pieces'. Even though he clearly perceives the dangers of unfettered individualism Conrad is unable to envisage the successful integration of the individual into the community. What his work seems to suggest is that ultimately the family must be rejected as a structural model for the community because its view of connection is artificially bounded and therefore far too limited. Modernist aesthetics do not allow for the possibility of an unproblematic subjectivity that can delineate exclusion and inclusion and therefore fix the bounds of the family. In Conrad's work the attempt to close down the sphere of connection is revealed as flawed. Hence one can see Brierly's suicide in *Lord Jim* as an oppressive example of the meaning of experiencing the self as part of a community. Jim's shame becomes insupportably Brierly's shame. Jim also recognises, later in the novel, that he shares an unavoidable kinship with Brown, which in turn leads to his 'suicide'. The point is that whilst for the Sartrean existentialist isolation is a positive guarantee of the possibility of freedom, for Conrad freedom itself is less clearly to be welcomed. Isolation is a condition to be overcome, at the same time connection may be not only

inescapable but intolerably oppressive⁴.

If one understands the institutional function of the family to be to transmit values and tradition then its structural function is to provide a model of the community. Conrad can seem out of step with other modernist writers because there is in his work a residual attachment to these concepts, however inadequate he may visualize them as being or however flawed they may be in their contemporary manifestation. That this is Conrad's position is quite clear from his theorisation of the relationship between the writer and his audience. The fact that Conrad struggles to find validation for his vision in general approval suggests the survival of a belief in a set of core values which can be recognised by a 'normative' community of readers. Conrad's fictions are after all often dramatically sited within a community frame, as tales told to an audience. The importance of this narrative scaffolding to Conrad may have less to do with his struggle with language, as Edward Said suggests (1984, 90-110), and more to do with the effort to visualise connection, to offset the feeling of writing in a vacuum, a feeling objectified in the figure of Axel Heyst's father - one of the few writers in Conrad's oeuvre - whose wisdom has been 'instinctively rejected' by 'all the world' (129).

John Carey has suggested that modernist literature and art involve the deliberate exclusion of the audience as part of a hostile response from intellectuals concerned with maintaining their elite status in the light of the threat from the newly enfranchised and literate 'mass' who are the product of nineteenth century educational reforms. Indeed if one accepts the proposition that there is much of the spirit of Nietzsche in modernist literature then there would appear to be some truth in Carey's position. After all it is Zarathustra

4. This is an interesting point since it goes against the historical genesis of the novel which according to Ian Watt was committed to a vision of the world that was fiercely individualistic. Thus whereas there is something to be welcomed for Robinson Crusoe's islanding, affording him 'absolute economic, social, and intellectual freedom...' (86), in Conrad's novels characters experience the absence of community as an excision of some fundamental ontological necessity. Lord Jim is in fact something of an anti-Crusoe in his craving for the embrace of the social.

who rejects the attempt to embrace everyone in his philosophy, 'when I spoke to everyone, I spoke to no one' (296); 'Books for everybody are always malodorous books: the smell of petty people clings to them' (*Genealogy of Morals* 61). A position incidentally that is endorsed by Heyst's father who describes his work as 'not meant for the crowd' (212). At the same time, however, Nietzsche is an evangelist for the benefits of reaching an audience. He argues that despite its difficulties, the benefits of communication are so great that it is worth making the attempt despite the risk of failure: 'the man who "communicates himself" gets rid of himself; and he who has "confessed", forgets' (*The Gay Science*). Conrad's works dramatise this 'will to confession' as a way for alienation to be overcome and for the self to be absorbed back into the social body. For example the Novalis epigraph to *Lord Jim*, 'It is certain my conviction gains infinitely, the moment another soul will believe in it' is suggestive of the novelist's as well as the characters' need for communication because of its structural position on the ^{threshold} of the work.

For a writer such as Conrad the work may be thought of as a kind of confession, a performative act designed to insinuate the author into the commonwealth, to transcend his isolation. The rejection of this 'confession', that is the lack of readers, means that the sense of isolation is magnified and casts doubt on the existence of a community and therefore the existence of a commonly held set of values. There is no doubt that Conrad felt his relationship with his audience a fraught one, and indeed that he invested it with an ontological significance. In the author's note to *Twixt Land and Sea* (1912) he describes his consternation at the prospect of not achieving a general readership:

drifting unconsciously into the position of a writer for a limited coterie; a position which would have been odious to me as throwing doubt on the soundness of my belief in the solidarity of all mankind in simple ideas and in sincere emotions.

In 'Conrad: The Presentation of Narrative' Edward Said (1984) argues that Conrad lived on both sides of the divide that Walter Benjamin describes in his essay on Leskov, between the storyteller who relies on a sense of community with the listener and is intent on communicating some useful information and

the novelist who has isolated himself: 'The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual' (Benjamin 87). Conrad the seaman, inhabitant of a community that communicates orally and that he calls 'the waterside' in *Lord Jim*, can rely on shared experience that makes possible the transmission of information; Conrad the novelist has to dramatise this possibility. Clearly then Conrad must struggle with what appears to be an inherent contradiction. The very writing of his work suggests the erosion of Marlovian communication that is at once a construction and an expression of community. That this investigation of the possibilities of communication has important ramifications is highlighted by Jeremy Hawthorn who argues that Conrad's practice as a novelist makes him part of the anonymous communicative relations instituted by capitalism. He:

seems to have seen parallels between the indirect chains of mediation between writer and reader cut off from personal contact with each other, and the indirect chains of mediation between imperialist and exploited people. (22)

It is this very mediated anonymity that makes colonialism possible, oppression through ignorance.

If Conrad reveals a painful ambivalence in his assessment of the individual caught between desires that often seem to conflict - connection and authenticity - the next two chapters will chart a progressive working out of this problem, without however completely succeeding in overcoming the pull of these forces which both Woolf and Lawrence construct as naturally hostile. Attention will now turn to a more direct exposition of these conflicts in relation to the family, and to a certain extent it will be seen that it is this very ambivalence, never entirely eliminated even in Lawrence's greater commitment to an anti-familial endorsement of the authenticity of individualism, that can be mobilised to defend that writer against the oft-repeated accusations of monological dogmatism.

III

Having it Both Ways: D.H. Lawrence and the Position of the Individual in Relation to the Family and the Community

In the previous chapter I argued for a method of reading Conrad's works that does not emphasize the diachronic dimension of the texts, and suggested that to some extent modernism itself promotes this type of reading through its challenge to temporal hierarchies and integrated, self-bounded structures. This way of proceeding is certainly not meant to exclude or elide changes to an author's perspective during the course of his writing life. The aim is to demonstrate the benefits of reading the oeuvre of a writer through an explanatory paradigm - in this case the family. The work of Lawrence highlights the value of this process. Much of the critical literature on Lawrence assumes a fracture in his work signalled by the publication of *Women in Love* in 1920. Different evaluative criteria and different methods of reading are applied to the works before and the works after this novel. I hope to show, without diminishing the change of direction and emphasis that Lawrence's work takes during the 1920's, the advantages of investigating Lawrence's work through a paradigm that straddles these two periods and thus allows all Lawrence's work to participate in the same conversation.

A prime example of the traditional approach to Lawrence's criticism focusing on this split in his oeuvre can be seen in F.R. Leavis's evangelical work *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), in which Leavis is primarily concerned with parrying the anti-Lawrence assaults of T.S. Eliot's *After Strange Gods* and establishing Lawrence at the heart of the canon. Lawrence is described by Leavis as being 'our last great writer' (9) whose work exhibits 'organic wholeness and vitality' (27), and is 'an affirmation' (244). By making his text an attack on Eliot, Leavis embodies formally what he attempts to defend critically, that is a fundamental

opposition between the modernists and Lawrence in which the possibility of mutual admiration is denied.¹ For Leavis, what makes Lawrence canonical is not only the subtlety of his examination of human experience but also his 'normative' (46) attitudes, the centrality of his perspective that gives him a 'positive' outlook upheld by the twin concepts of 'reverence' and 'life' (76) as opposed to the constrained aestheticism of modernism that leads to a 'kind of addiction to art' (26). However, Leavis's critical admiration is heavily weighted towards the pre-1920 novels.

In these early works Lawrence is seen by Leavis as 'the product of a fine and mature civilisation, the sanctions, the valuations, and the pieties of which speak through the individual' (75). He is lauded for his communication of a community of universal and timeless beliefs. In other words he is praised for his 'normality' which in narrative terms equates to a commitment to the familial and the communal. In fact he is defended precisely on those grounds which are most open to question; which modernist works have done most to destroy in their formal fracturing of the totality of realism. I would argue that Lawrence's work exhibits an obsession with the politics of the family through which can be traced a shift from the 'normative' social to the 'eccentric' individual perspective, a shift that is embodied in the narrative of his works and that not only affects but is effected by his theories of the place and function of the family. To admit that Lawrence's values are not 'central' or 'normative' would be to challenge the reality of these very categories, it would strike at the *heart* of the Leavisite sense of literature's moral purpose in defining the spiritual identity of the community. It surely reveals the strain under which Leavis is labouring when he unequivocally invokes Lawrence as the author of the true values of the English community in the teeth of Lawrence's oft-repeated hostility towards his 'mother-country', his extended physical exile, and his turn to foreign cultures in his later works.

1. In the second appendix, 'Mr. Eliot and Mr. Lawrence', Leavis argues that Eliot's erroneous judgments are the consequence of his being an 'outsider'. In other words he invokes the paradigm of community to underpin his critical judgements.

This positioning of Lawrence at the core of a vital tradition, premised on a selective reading of the Lawrence oeuvre, is shared by Raymond Williams. He sees in the early novels, up to *The Rainbow*, an interweaving of the voice of the narrator with the voice of his characters which places the narrator within a shared context. He notes the way in which Lawrence successfully navigates the distance between the educated language of the novelist 'and the language of these newly described men and women - a familiar language, steeped in a place and in work' (171). In a letter to Blanche Jennings criticising the work of George Eliot, Lawrence addresses directly this very question of the objective distance that fiction creates between narrator and character: 'Folks *will* want things intellectually done, so they take refuge in George Eliot. I am very fond of her, but I wish she'd take her specs off, and come down off the public platform'.² Lawrence clearly conceives of the erasure of narrative distance as a bold project, an assault on the intellectualism that provides a 'refuge' of secure perspective and discrimination for classical realism. He seeks to integrate the consciousness of the narrative with the characters and situations it depicts, to efface the sanctuary of a stable public/private division through which assured judgement is generated. This commitment to integration finds its expression in Lawrence's early novels, not only through their narrative voice but also in their depiction of the community and the family. Whilst it is certainly the case that Lawrence is never an unequivocal apologist for the family it is equally the case that in the early work, particularly *The White Peacock*, but also more complexly in *Sons and Lovers*, and *The Rainbow* there is a level of idealisation of familial relations.

Lawrence's later novels suffer from the very dissociation which he is at such pains to abolish in the early works. This cleavage in the narrative voice of the Lawrentian canon can be mapped precisely onto the radical change of direction in the work itself during the 1920's. Raymond Williams praises in his introduction to *Three Plays* the way in which all Lawrence's early work vivifies the community by 'speaking in and with them' so that there is a constant

2. D.H. Lawrence, letter to Blanche Jennings, 22 December 1908. *Letters I*: 101.

slippage between the language of the narrator and the language of the characters, an interconnectedness that allows the individual voice to be absorbed into the narrative without prejudicing its holism; an absence of the Olympian perspective that underlay the realism of the nineteenth century. Lawrence's early fictions (the three plays *A Collier's Friday Night* (written in 1909), *The Daughter-in-Law* (published in 1912), *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd* (published in 1914), and the early parts of the novels *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, and *The Lost Girl*) have a quasi-sociological dimension akin to that of Hardy and Bennett determined by the need to identify to the public a community, complete with its own mythology, with which they were unfamiliar. As Lawrence detaches himself physically and socially from the environment of his childhood and becomes more intensely preoccupied with his private obsessions both the language and the structure of the work turn away from the community and find themselves involved in the modernist presentation of private experience, the abandonment of the communal perspective.

That the presentation of narrative voice is bound up with a conception and theorisation of the family can be illustrated by reference to *Aaron's Rod* (1922). This novel is very clearly about the constraints that society and more particularly the family impose on the individual, constraints that frustrate his freedom. In explaining to Josephine why he left his wife and children Aaron says 'I wanted fresh air' (83). In a novel exercised by the possibilities of individualism Lawrence is obliged to confront his own position as author in relation to Aaron. Lawrence assesses the likelihood of Aaron's having the subtle and complex apprehension of his and others' motives that is accorded him:

The inaudible music of his conscious soul conveyed his meaning in him quite as clearly as I convey it in words: probably much more clearly. But in his own mode only: and it was in his own mode only he realized what I must put into words. These words are my own affair. His mind was music. (199)

Thus Lawrence constructs an extremely clever and subtle defence of the freedom of his character. He argues that as the author what he is doing with Aaron's non-verbal, musical perceptions is translating them into language the reader can understand without in fact infringing on Aaron's privacy or offering

up his consciousness for consumption. Lawrence here is having it both ways, transmitting Aaron's thoughts whilst maintaining Aaron's inviolate freedom by asserting the inaccessibility of his mind. Lawrence's intervention in the text to explain this process is less the defence of the 'realism' of his work (his 1908 letters to Blanche Jennings for example, show that from the time of the composition of the 'Laetitia' drafts of *The White Peacock* his commitment to classical realism was at best pragmatic) than an attempt to show how the author provides space for the independence of the character.

Lawrence's need to confront the reader over his textual practice in *Aaron's Rod* is an expression of a fear that the appearance of an omniscient narrative, the author speaking from the sort of privileged position that equates to the position of the father in the family, is enough to undermine the novel's very critique of familialism. It is well documented that modernism rehearses new forms of representation, it is less clearly noted that these new forms are attempts to escape the familial model of the old ones. Anna Snaith in a recent article in the *Journal of Modern Literature* argues that Woolf's narrative strategies, her presentation of the voice of the character is an integral expression of her political position. She speaks of 'the embedding of Woolf's politics in her narrative methods' (134). I would argue that the presentation of narrative becomes a conscious object of concern for all modernist writers; as Henry James puts it in his Preface to *The Ambassadors* (1903): 'there is the story of one's hero, and then, thanks to the intimate connection of things, the story of one's story itself' (xxxiv); and that all narrative implies a political position on behalf of the author.

The works of Henry James, of course, provide a striking exploration of this problematics of narrative representation. In a work such as *The Ambassadors* James quite consciously abandons the fiction of an objective, privileged perspective in an attempt to embody all the action of the novel in one subjective centre of consciousness. I think one needs to recognise that this is something more than formal experimentation. *The Ambassadors* is a novel that is concerned with the power and authority of the family. Lambert Strether, who has lost his wife and child, is sent on a mission (by the mother, Mrs Newsome)

to rescue the son. His designation as 'ambassador' is surely an indication of the fact that James sees his story through a political glass. He recognises that what is at stake is the power of the family narrative to direct and control.

If James's practice of focusing the narrative through a single limited perceiving consciousness is one method of breaking down the narrative authority of the family then an alternative way of achieving this result is through what Carol Sklenicka describes as the 'polyglossia' of *The Rainbow*. That is the way in which that novel absorbs and interweaves a variety of voices and outlooks, refuting the need for a consistent perspective and indeed averting the shearing of the text into a dualism of character and narrator through which all other binary metaphysical oppositions may seep. In its very sharing of idiom, the narrative voice is supremely expressive of a community of values that places Lawrence within the social context of a central tradition. Indeed Sklenicka goes so far as to suggest that in the early parts of this novel the technique is so pronounced that it gives the narrative 'a *familial* point of view' (66).

Interestingly then Sklenicka pursues her argument through the employment of a metaphor that it is one of the purposes of this thesis to interrogate. Her use here indicates the slippery nature of her argument but also unconsciously reveals the extent to which Lawrence's formal literary structures are bound up with his apprehension of the family. The adjective is 'slippery' because it is literally meaningless, or at least so referential as to be beyond interpretation, subject as it is to the cultural and historical reformulations that this thesis will trace. However, for this same reason it acts as a kind of interpretive key by which one can unlock Lawrence's changing attitudes. Sklenicka's use of 'family' to suggest the Leavisite community demonstrates the importance of the point that I made at the start of the chapter of considering Lawrence's work as a whole. Her employment of this adjective ignores what is most significant about it, its slipperiness. Because of her bias towards the early novels, Sklenicka overlooks the fact that in his later work, for example *The Plumed Serpent*, 'family' tends to imply the closing down of this multiplicity along the lines of monological patriarchy. In fact from *The Rainbow* on there is a marked abandonment of the polyglossal narrative and a turning inwards to a

dogmatically 'Lawrentian', individualistic perspective. This formal textual closure of multiple perspectives is accompanied by the withdrawal from the family of the central structuring role it occupied in society and the nineteenth century plot of realism. This closure of multiple perspectives and retreat from the family are stitched into the fabric of *The Lost Girl* (1920).

Whereas in the early works Williams had noted how the narrative took on the voice of the characters, in *The Lost Girl* the characters take on the voice of the narrative so that there is a complete collapse of character under the stress of Lawrence's ideology. Thus although the 'heroine', Alvina Houghton, is accorded the privilege of focalising the action, that is of mediating it through her consciousness, this consciousness becomes less and less distinguishable from the narrative frame.³ The collapse also extends to the erosion of the gap between the narrator and the implied author so that, for example, after Alvina's first sexual encounter with Cicio the conversational tone of the narration is dropped in favour of the use of distinctive 'Lawrentian' metaphors and perspectives, 'powerful', 'mysterious', 'darkness', 'unknown beauty', 'unfathomed handsomeness' (244). This disintegration of the polyglossal narrative runs in tandem with the fall of Manchester House, it is made possible by the transference in this novel of cultural significance away from the family and towards the couple. In other words the turn away from the publicly locatable structure of the family to the inwardness and privacy of the interpersonal exclusive relationship is shadowed by a language that becomes increasingly esoteric. That Lawrence intends the reader to understand the action in this way is indicated I think in the titles of the first two chapters where 'the Decline of Manchester House' leads to 'the Rise of Alvina Houghton'. The emergence of the individual is premised on the demise of the family system. As Lawrence increasingly turns away from the collective social vision to the interior experience of the individual it becomes more difficult to defend the Leavisite polarisation with modernism, after all, precisely the same movement can be found in Joyce's work from *Dubliners* (1914) to *Ulysses* (1922). In spite of this

3. Roger Fowler, 'The Lost Girl: Discourse and Focalisation' in Keith Brown (ed.) *Rethinking Lawrence*.

commitment to the truth of the individual vision neither Lawrence nor Joyce ever escape from their textual entanglement with the family.

Lawrence's first major statement of his commitment to the integrity of the individual, what Leavis called Lawrence's 'steady religious passion' (102), is made in *Study of Thomas Hardy* which in December 1914 he is calling his 'confessio fidei' and his 'philosophy' and which was composed whilst working on a thorough rewriting of *The Rainbow*. Here Lawrence states explicitly his conception of the need for man to live in conformity with his inner flame regardless of social mores:

Let every man take his own, and go his own way, regardless of system and State, when his hour comes. Which is greater, the State or myself? Myself, unquestionably, since the State is only an arrangement made for my convenience. If it is not convenient for me, I must depart from it. There is no need to break laws. The only need is to be a law unto oneself. (38)

Lawrence therefore finds Hardy's characters 'pathetic rather than tragic figures' (49) because they do not have the strength to force a breach with the community despite their inner promptings. It is this pursuit of individual fulfilment beyond the restrictions of the community and the family that is depicted in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

The Rainbow dramatises an almost evolutionary development in which is traced the possibility of individual freedom beyond the family, produced out of the symbiosis of psychic and economic growth that means that Ursula does not have to relinquish 'the adventure to the unknown' (238) as her mother has done. To describe *The Rainbow* as 'evolutionary' is to mark its pivotal position in Lawrence's oeuvre since this is also the work in which he dispenses with the diachronic perspective, the perspective of the genetic connection of the family. The correlation of individual destiny to active social forces that one finds in the Edwardian fiction of E.M.Forster or, for example, in Arnold Bennett's *Clayhanger* (1910) plays only a secondary role in Lawrence's work. Whereas a novelist such as H.G.Wells conceived of social forces as producing generalised character types: 'on week days when all good Mr Pollys are shut up in shops' (*The History of Mr Polly* 75), Lawrence tends to replace the active

force of society in forging character (which implies passivity on the part of the individual) with interpersonal dynamics.

The interpersonal relationship comes to dominate Lawrence's creative energies, displacing the wider societal concerns that were adumbrated particularly in the early parts of *The Rainbow* and *Sons and Lovers*. Its constructed, rather than inherited nature, is illustrated by the architectural metaphor of the arch which indicates that this type of relationship needs to be fabricated and resolutely maintained:

We are two opposites which exist by virtue of our inter-opposition. Remove the opposition and there is a collapse, a sudden crumbling into universal nothingness. ('The Crown' 1915, 367)

The culmination of this process is to divorce the individual from any sense of connection to society so that by the end of *The Rainbow* Ursula is able to assert: ' "I have no father nor mother nor lover, I have no allocated place in the world of things..." (545). This disconnection has been prepared for by a shift in narrative strategy that has revealed Ursula from the inside, from her psyche, rather than describing her from the outside which is how Anna has been presented. Literally one might say that this novel embodies the shift in character depiction that Woolf notes in 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown' (1923) from the 'outward-in' conventions of the Edwardians to the 'inward-out' technique of the 'Georgians'.

In *Women in Love*, this psychic state is given full rein, Ursula rejects her family, her antecedents, her anterior connections, she wishes to divest herself of the past in order to accede purely into her own unique being:

She wanted to have no past. She wanted to have come down from the slopes of heaven to this place, with Birkin, not to have toiled out of the murk of her childhood and her upbringing, slowly, all soiled. (460)

This is a statement of the view that to be an individual, to claim an identity, it is necessary to throw off the influence of the family. This revolutionary logic contradicts the ideology of the family that sees itself, its traditions, its genealogy, as the custodian of character and identity. Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* deals precisely with this confrontation between the identity politics of the family which demand conformity and the identity politics of the

individual that are based on breaking the mould. Hanno's impossible struggle as the fourth generation of Buddenbrook is to free himself from the weight of tradition and modes of behaviour that have been bequeathed to him. As far as Frau Permanander is concerned his only duty is to:

perform the high task allotted to him - that task being to carry on the family name and add fresh lustre to the family reputation. It could not be in vain that he possessed so much likeness to his great-grandfather. (538)

In fact, however different from his forebears Hanno might appear to be, Mann makes it very clear that his destiny is bound up with the destiny of the family, his very death seems the logical expression of the effeteness of the Buddenbrooks as Hanno himself seems to be aware:

Nothing can come of me, that is perfectly sure. One day, after confirmation-class, I heard Pastor Pringsheim tell somebody that one must just give me up, because I come of a decayed family. (574)

What both Hanno and Ursula reveal in their different ways is the perception that the individual must struggle to attain his own identity in opposition to the authority of the past. This struggle is integral to the project of modernity itself. In the essay 'Literary History and Literary Modernity' Paul de Man assesses the self-contradictions that afflict the attempt to exorcise the moment from its historical prerogative. He notes in Nietzsche's essay 'Of the Use and Misuse of History for Life' the fact that it is impossible to jettison the past and retain at the same time a critical focus on the present:

But this very life that has to forget must also at times be able to stop forgetting; then it will become clear how illegitimate the existence of something, of a privilege, a caste or a dynasty actually is, and how much it deserves to be destroyed. Then the past is judged critically, attacked at its very roots with a sharp knife, and brutally cut down, regardless of established pieties...we are inevitably the result of earlier generations and thus the result of their mistakes, their passions and aberrations, even of their crimes; it is not possible to loosen oneself entirely from this chain...Afterwards, we try to give ourselves a new past from which we should have liked to descend instead of the past from which we actually descended... (1971, 149)

Lawrence's work instantiates this idea: it is at once a ferocious attack on the past and an evangelism of the healthiness of absolute forgetting, yet in the very formulation of these ideas by Ursula there is the recurrence of the historical in the echoing of Nietzsche.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of escaping from the past and therefore from the constraints of the family narrative there can be no doubt that Lawrence's steady

commitment is to the truth of the individual. He says in *Study of Thomas Hardy* that the end of evolution towards which the individual must strive is the establishment of distinctness, separateness: 'The final aim of every living thing, creature, or being is the full achievement of itself' (12). Carol Sklenicka points out that it is this establishment of individuality premised as an escape from the past that is upheld as the positive value throughout *Women in Love*. Ursula understands that in order to embark on her relationship with Birkin she must first divest herself of all old connections as indeed must he. Birkin is the most powerful spokesman for individualism in Lawrence's work, but it is a concept that underlies all the novels after *Sons and Lovers* and is at the root of Lawrence's rejection of Christianity, democracy and ultimately the family.⁴

Clearly then Lawrence's construction of individualism is oppositional and demands freedom for the self not only from the contingent ties of society but also from the vertical structure of genealogy. It is in this dual demand that it is possible to identify the way in which disruption of the secure sequentialism of temporal linearity erupts into the heart of the family problematising the process of 'natural inheritance' and consequently casting doubt on the position of the individual in the social structure. In *Sons and Lovers* Paul Morel's struggle with his psycho-sexual development is the effort to order the two cultural positions of the title in their chronological sequentiality. He is unable to enact the separation from the private role of son to the social role of lover. Lawrence sees this cultural transition as fraught with difficulty.

In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922) Lawrence argues that there is a need for the child to go through some savage initiation ritual that would define a clearly demarcated border and that would inevitably propel the child into manhood (133). René Girard has argued in relation to primitive societies that this transitional identity ^{threshold} is regarded as potentially hazardous. The change of roles from 'son' to 'lover' opens up a gap between these positions that 'could well become a terrible abyss swallowing up the entire cultural structure' (1979,

4. For a discussion of this aspect of Lawrence's work see Graham Hough, 217-60.

281). What makes this particularly problematic in modernist writing is that the rejection of the family narrative leaves the son without a model to facilitate his socialisation. If becoming a lover means becoming like the father then it is hardly surprising that in the conscious desire to reject that cultural position the son struggles to bridge the gap into public life: 'Being the sons of mothers whose husbands had blundered rather brutally through their feminine sanctities, they were themselves too diffident and shy' (*Sons and Lovers* 340).

In the rejection of the familial model, all change becomes disconnected metamorphosis rather than developmental necessity. Paul Morel's problem is to conflate two roles as a single moment, an inability to exist in terms of a thoroughgoing consequentiality. That this is a problem that resides at the very core of Lawrence's text is indicated by Miriam's confusion at Paul's treatment of her. The securely positioned daughter, socialised in her prescribed familial role, understands the mechanics of sequentiality through the realist model of cause and effect. Therefore she is incapable of interpreting the apparently unmotivated behaviour of Paul's harsh treatment. Paul however is in thrall to a temporality that might be called psychological as opposed to sequential, in which the consequentiality necessary to causation is closed down by a temporality based on the homology of son and lover.

It is worth considering how this non-compliance with the realist temporal hierarchy of simple consequentiality, cause leading to effect, fits in with the project of modernism more generally. In 'Modern Art and its Philosophy' T.E. Hulme constructs a developmental model for modernism in which the first stage is a complete break with the past, a rejection of historical values. Clearly one could relate this position to the rejection of realist narrative modes and to the psychology of Ursula in *Women in Love* referred to earlier. In fact the use of myth in the works of Lawrence and Joyce demonstrates one of the ways in which modernism seeks to replace the idea of genetic/generic inheritance with a broader synchronicism that finds its fulfilment in *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and *The Escaped Cock* (1927) and that draws its inspiration therefore from Nietzsche's replacement of history with myth in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

If one were seeking an aetiology of this desire for separation, the obvious place to locate it would be in the experience of the First World War. Placed in this context the mythopoeticism of Lawrence and Joyce can be seen as the inverse of Richard Aldington's reaction to the war in *Death of a Hero* (1929) which takes the form of an obsessive immersion in recent history as a way of discovering an explanation and location of blame for the horrific events he describes. In a sense the overthrow of linear connection that is a major facet of modernist writing is an attempt to disrupt the causal chain that leads towards an historical inevitability. At the same time it presents an affront to that authority which relies on precedence for its supremacy, the chief institution benefitting from this dispensation being the family.

In the works of male modernist writers it is often the mother who appears as the supreme representative of historical continuity and therefore the chief agent from whom the protagonist must liberate himself in order to accede to an authentic sense of being. Indeed so dominant does this aspect become in Lawrence's work that in his later novels, *Kangaroo* (1923) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) he even allows for the re-emergence of genealogy as a way of further effacing the position of the mother. In both these novels Lawrence bases the importance of lineage on the transmission of the purely paternal. Thus in *Kangaroo* it is as the son of a working man that Somers elicits an intuitive response from Jack (54), in *The Plumed Serpent* Quetzalcoatl is a god without a mother.

This concern with lineage connects Lawrence with the current obsessions of his time. Samuel Hynes points out in *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*⁵ that the inglorious prosecution of the Boer War led contemporary commentators in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to focus on the danger posed to the Empire by the degeneration of the population under the pressure of urban population growth. Lawrence ^{shared} this political concern with the family and the problems of heredity. His novels of the mid 1920's seek to repossess the

5. See in particular the chapter, 'The Decline and Fall of Tory England'.

concept of lineage whilst at the same time not losing sight of the commitment to individualism. There is a move away from the absolute investment in individualism adumbrated in earlier work such as *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Women in Love* towards a political assessment of the crisis of personal relations premised on the erosion of paternal authority.

Thus for Lawrence it is not the strength but the weakness of the father that is at the root of society's problems. If the father remained separate in his unimpeachable power the identification between father and son that enables the formation of the Oedipus complex could not take place. However, in contemporary society the father functions as a kind of absent presence:

It is not law, in any conceivable form, that is responsible for the tensions and alienation besetting modern man; rather it is the increasing lack of law...Our best guide is perhaps Kafka, one of the few to perceive that the absence of law is in fact identical with law run wild and that this identity constitutes the chief burden of mankind...When the father is no longer an overbearing patriarch the son looks everywhere for the law - and finds no lawgiver.
(Girard 1979, 189)

One might go further and argue that by the time of *The Lost Girl*, with its presentation of a succession of matriarchs culminating in the powerful figure of Madame Rochard, the law has become the possession of the 'mother'.

It is in the works of the 1920's that Lawrence feels the need to consciously fabricate the patriarchal lineage. The early works pointed towards the usurpation of power in contemporary society by women. The later works attempt to reconfigure the true orientation of male power - literally to show the patriarchal lineage in action. In the short story 'Hadrian' (1920), for example, the narrative works to reconnect a male heir to an inheritance that is in danger of being usurped by women. In an attempt to offset the feminine character of his household (he has four daughters), Ted Rockley goes to London and adopts a son of six, named Hadrian. As soon as he is old enough to do so, Hadrian leaves the Rockley family for the colonies only returning after the War. It is with the return of Hadrian that Lawrence's story begins. Significantly, at the start of the story, Matilda and Emmie Rockley are described as happy and in the succeeding two sentences we learn that their mother is dead and that their father is terminally ill. Hadrian's re-entry into the household upsets this idyll of

feminine dominance. The story moves towards the reconnection of the male lineage, the transmission of authority and property from Ted Rockley to Hadrian. What is particularly significant about this story is that it seeks to re-assert and re-imagine the potency of the patriarchal bond at the limit point of the family. After all, Hadrian is not genetically linked to Ted Rockley which is why their compact can be sealed by Hadrian's marriage to Matilda, the mother/sister figure: ' "I'm old enough to be your mother. In a way I've been your mother" ' (106). It is almost as if, conscious that within the family there can be no contact between father and son, Lawrence retains his commitment to this model of power relations by abstracting it from the genetic family.

One can read 'Hadrian' metaphorically as marking a turn in modernist literature towards 'sons' like Hadrian (one thinks also of Stephen Dedalus, Lord Jim, and Jacob Flanders), 'orphans' who eschew provincial Bennettian settings and choose the metropolis and the colonies as their arenas of action. In this way modernism's break with the past is literally a break with the family, the son has become an orphan - there is no longer any reason why he should be tied to a particular locale. It was not that Lawrence and other modernists newly perceived this disconnection, it was rather that for the first time they felt that living with its implications was preferable to attempting to seal the gap.

This willingness to abandon the anchors of home, family, and culture, marks out the difference between modernists and their immediate forebears. Arnold Bennett, for example, a writer so caught up in the politics of patriarchy that he dropped his deceased father's name from his own, perceives danger in abstracting any discourse from its social and historical context. In *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908) it is precisely because Sophia is not cut off from her history/genealogy, from her family inheritance (the values and character of a Bursley draper's daughter) that she is able to survive in Paris. In contrast Cyril Povey's complete psychological dissociation from his upbringing, his separation from the Five Towns, leaves him powerless to achieve in the absence of a sustaining social and 'familial' narrative to uphold him. This point is clearly demonstrated in *Clayhanger* where Edwin's ignorance of his family's, particularly his father's, history is explicitly stated in the text: 'once his form had

“got” as far as the infancy of his own father...But the next term he was recoiling round Henry the Eighth’ (39) and is a major cause of the breakdown in understanding between father and son.

As far as Bennett is concerned failure to connect with the past distorts actions in the present and robs them of meaning. In *Clayhanger*, Shushions is treated as an object of fun at the Centenary celebrations by ‘shallow Samaritans who had not even the wit to guess that he had sown what they were reaping’ (237). Bennett’s novel moves towards a resolution of this problem, a reconciliation between past and present that will form a new basis of understanding across the generations. Thus whereas at the start of the novel Edwin is ignorant of the provenance of the clay (34), the very substance that moulds his environment and its history, by the end of the novel it is precisely this knowledge that he is able to communicate across the generations to the ‘son’ George and thus hopefully is able to connect him with the ordinary narrative that will help him to fully articulate his identity.

Ultimately Bennett’s major narratives, *The Old Wives’ Tale* and *Clayhanger*, contain the same vision of the construction of character through the inescapable inheritance of the family as that which can be found in many of the novels of the nineteenth century; in works, for example, such as *Bleak House* where identity is generated through the revelation of familial origins. Self-knowledge in the pre-Freud text is essentially a matter of generational static origins, rather than active construction. It is a question of knowing whence you came (if an ‘orphan’ reveals a nobility of spirit then it is because he is the son of a gentleman). One needs to be wary of making generalisations, but it may be that in a society undergoing unprecedented change and rapid alteration the commitment to an ideology of identity that suggested character was fixed in caste-like terms was a necessary foil to fears generated by the removal of all fixed points and stable ground as a secure platform for judgement. If the threat from social, cultural, economic and political upheaval to the stable construction of identity is certainly registered in Victorian and Edwardian fiction, then it is in the work of modernists, Lawrence in particular, that all such fears are banished and the abandonment of external influences on character is relished. John

Worthen notes in his introduction to *The Rainbow* that, despite the novel's framework of family history, all the most important events that befall the characters are moments of revelation in their inner lives which makes the novel according to him Lawrence's 'greatest tribute to the detached individual' (30). Indeed in Lawrence's later work it is historical structuring, understood in the broadest possible sense, that he seems to wish to escape. Somers's journey to Australia is a withdrawal from 'the old closing-in of Europe' to a new country, 'the youngest country on the globe' (*Kangaroo* 32).

One can discern in Lawrence's work then a willingness to engage with the dynamics of a particular experience without referring it to a more general context. This results in an emphasis on the individual at the expense of the communal and has, for Lawrence, a moral dimension. In *The Rainbow* Skrebensky's immersion in the general, the public, the institution, 'my real home, I suppose, is the army' (338), is the expression of a Lawrentian anti-principle. Skrebensky would seem to have no existence or being separable from his function ('duty') so that to Ursula committed unreservedly to the positivity of her own individual identity he appears as a pure negation: ' "It seems to me," she answered, "as if you weren't anybody - as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me" ' (357). In *Education of the People* (1918) Lawrence makes a similar point in arguing that people should take responsibility for their own being, that they should act in accordance with their own inner necessity and not from some impulse dictated by their relations with others: 'if only people can learn to do as they like and to have what they like, instead of madly aspiring to do what everybody likes and to look as everybody would like to look' (652) .

That this condition of integrity is not something that one can just possess but must actively strive to achieve is revealed in the 'Nightmare' chapter of *Kangaroo* in which Lawrence chronicles as heroic struggle the battle to maintain self-integrity in the face of the bullying and hysteria of the mass community, the 'bloated ignominy' of *John Bull*. Somers wishes to protect himself against the spiritual incursions of the mass. To join the army would be a self-betrayal, submission to the collective:

This is the greatest secret of behaviour: to stand alone and judge oneself from the depths of one's own soul. And then, to know, to hear what the other's say and think: to refer their judgement to the touchstone of one's own soul-judgement. To fear one's own inward soul, and never to fear the outside world, nay, not even one single person, nor even fifty million persons. (278)

Somers develops a moral code in which right and wrong are premised on the integrity of the individual soul and it is made quite explicit that this individualism does not represent a commitment to a higher form of morality than that offered by the community but is in fact the only form of morality that Lawrence can envisage.

As a consequence of this viewpoint Lawrence has no moral qualms concerning Aaron Sisson's abandonment of his home in *Aaron's Rod*. Quite simply he has to leave so that his soul will not be 'distorted' by the demands of others and so that he will be able to live a life of 'perfected singleness' (155). The evangelical individualist, Rawdon Lilly, describes how the self can achieve its true nature only if it is left unmolested by external agents:

I am I, and only I am I, and I am only I in so far, I am inevitably and eternally alone, and it is my last blessedness to know it, and to accept it, and to live with this as the core of my self-knowledge. (289)

Indeed it is in *Aaron's Rod* that Lawrence puts forward his least compromising vision of the necessity for a kind of existential isolation for the soul. His argument, premising identity on separation, seems to recognise that the child can only say 'I am I' when it accepts its separateness, its loss of the pre-symbolic unity with the mother. However, if this construction appears to recall Conrad then Lawrence's work can be distinguished by its announcement of a much more strident rejection of nostalgia for the lost world of unity with the other: whether that other be constructed as the mother, the organic community, or the family.

Lawrence's work then moves towards a passionate commitment to the idea that the individual must be understood independently of his social, economic, political, historical, or familial context. He suggests that what is important about 'being' is internal:

Who is there who searches out the origin of the sickness, with a hope to quench the malady at its source?

It lies in the heart of man, and not in the conditions - that is obvious, yet always forgotten. It is not a malaria that blows in through the window and attacks us when we are healthy. We are each of us a swamp, we are like the hide-bound cabbage going rotten at the heart.

(*Study of Thomas Hardy* 15)

For Lawrence therefore man must find his answers internally and it is this struggle with the self that is the object of his concern: 'The tale is about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete' (*Study of Thomas Hardy* 20). All artists, according to Lawrence, must be on the side of the individual, opposed to the communal.

Politically, Lawrence's rejection of community as inhibitive of self-development fits in with Freud's analysis in *Totem and Taboo* of community as an essentially conservative social force seeking the maintenance of the status quo. Freud's understanding of taboo restrictions is filtered through a language that is heavily impregnated with the ideology of nineteenth-century capitalism. He sees taboos as primarily concerned with protecting the 'legal' community from the assaults of the individual. In the terms of capitalist society taboo can be understood as a set of shared cultural principles the violation of which threatens the basis of the community by undermining the efficacy of contract. In the late nineteenth century, as Tony Tanner has argued, there are a number of novels which seem to test the contractual relations that society implicitly rests upon and all of which eventually resolve themselves in the family. One theme of such novels, the theme that Tanner highlights and the one that most directly affects the family is adultery, as explored for example in *Anna Karenina* (1873-7). Anna's rejection, as a mother, of her contractual obligations is in effect the sort of breach that Freud makes clear in *Totem and Taboo* the whole community demands be punished and punished unequivocally since the crime threatens to undermine the community as a whole (89). Given the essentially conservative nature of community it is hardly surprising that Lawrence should be its opponent. However, this rejection of the values of the group does not mean that Lawrence is free to ignore the individual's place in the world. Even the self-sufficient individual has to live in society and interact with others. Indeed the individual is not born but has to be manufactured. One does not start life as isolated and later come into connection, one is born into a family and must struggle, in Lawrence's terms, to escape its influence. It is therefore

not surprising that Lawrence should pay particular attention to the role of the family as both the transmitter of the values of the community and as the incubator of the psyche.

The development of psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth century provided a new way of thinking about the effect of the family on the evolution of the individual psyche. Indeed Lawrence's transformation of *Paul Morel* into *Sons and Lovers* in October 1912 shows an early appreciation of the importance of Freudian psychoanalysis for understanding this relationship. Given the growing cultural awareness of psychoanalytical theory in the early twentieth century it is hardly surprising that Lawrence's texts, and those of many of his contemporaries, should demonstrate a new understanding of the family. It is noticeable, however, that the literary treatment of the family in the works say of Lawrence, Woolf, and Joyce, or even of Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann or Henry James does not follow the path that is apparently laid by early psychoanalytic theory. Lawrence, for instance, is constantly struggling with forms of the family: matriarchal/*The White Peacock*, *The Lost Girl*; nuclear/*Sons and Lovers*; patriarchal/*Kangaroo*; hieratic/*The Plumed Serpent* whereas Freud closes down the familial perspective on the development of the child because he assumes as timeless and universal a relation between parents and children (family form) that is clearly specific to the late nineteenth-century European bourgeoisie. Thus if one were tempted to say that the development of psychoanalysis was responsible for drawing attention, in a new way, to the significance of the family one would have to add the caveat that those writers whom I mentioned earlier stress the productive interdynamics of the family across the generations to a much greater extent than does Freud.

This difference between the pre-Freud nineteenth-century perspective and the Freud-influenced twentieth century perspective on the family can be illustrated through a comparison of Dickens with Lawrence. There is no question that Dickens's fictions like Lawrence's betray an obsession with the family. *Bleak House* overflows with families whose internal dynamics Dickens takes the trouble to explore: the Jellybys, the Skimpoles, the Pardiggles, the Turveydrops (father and son), the Neckett children, the Dedlocks, the Smallweeds, Jenny

and Elizabeth (as mothers), the Bagnets, the state (as murderous parent to its wards Ada and Richard), the Woodcourts (mother and son), the Flites (destroyed by Chancery), and the Rouncewells. Despite this proliferation, what is never challenged in Dickens is the assumption that the family has a correct form the knowledge of which is in the possession of the author. Dickens's project, to employ twentieth-century language, is to expose dysfunction and thereby to propagate an authoritative norm. Lawrence on the other hand is denied this secure conviction, His texts represent a genuine essaying of possibilities, a journeying rather than a confident espousal of arrival, mirroring Lawrence's biographical pursuit of alternative communities. The effect of this difference is that whilst Lawrence adduces the productive implications of family form on the individual, the essentialism of Dickens leads him to glide over the creative developmental interaction of the individual psyche with social structures.

For example, *Sons and Lovers* reveals very clearly how the child can be affected by the position it is forced by the parents to occupy within the family. In his book *Psychoanalysis and Fiction* Daniel Gunn has described this condition in a way that has particular resonance for a novel like *Sons and Lovers*:

if the parents, because of some failed love or uncompleted mourning or unarticulated family instability on their part...are experiencing intense frustration and lack in their own lives, they may allow or even oblige the infant to become (and remain) the object which fills this lack, satisfies the frustration, and cauterises the scar of the unsaid. (86)

Lawrence's work reveals how one parent's annexation of the affection of the child can modulate, for that child, into an hostility towards the other parent. In a sense then Lawrence recognises some truth in the psychic structure of the Oedipus complex but is at pains in his fiction to reveal, at an individual level, the perverse interactions between parent and child that bring this state into being. In all Lawrence's early work the presence of something like the Oedipus complex can be detected. Most obviously this is the case in *Sons and Lovers* but Lawrence's first novel, *The White Peacock*, in which George Saxton's son is described as being full of 'childish hate of his father' (479) provides an even more extended examination of this theme. The demise of George Saxton is

founded on his absorption into a family. His pure organic nature is adulterated by the imposition of self-consciousness that this structure seems to demand.

In his non-fiction also, Lawrence examines the psychological damage inflicted on the child through parental conflicts:

It is despicable for any one parent to accept a child's sympathy against the other parent. And the one who received the sympathy is always more contemptible than the one who is hated. (*Fantasia of the Unconscious* 96)

In *Education of the People* Lawrence recommends the nurturance of Romulus and Remus as a model of parenting, the suckling of a she-wolf who instead of seeking sympathy would have 'kicked me back into a rocky corner when she'd had enough of me' (627). Such an upbringing is seen as having been conducive for the Romans to the founding of 'a great, great race: because they had no mother: a race of men' (632).

By the mid-1920's Lawrence had largely abandoned the exploration of parental interaction on the formation of the child. He now pursued a more dogmatic philosophy in which the 'sicknesses' he identifies have a single cause: the female arrogation of masculine power. It is therefore only in the early novels that Lawrence attends to the potentially destructive capacity of the dependent psychology of parental intercourse. Thereafter, in *Aaron's Rod*, or *The Plumed Serpent*, for instance, parental intercommunication seems to have already ossified into a sterile conflict of wills with no point of connection so that it cannot really be said that there is any interaction at all between Lottie and Aaron, or between Carlota and Ramón.

Women in Love can be read as being on the ^{threshold} of this change of direction in Lawrence's work so that although the narrative moves towards a more ostensibly individualistic perspective there is still acknowledgement of a point of contact between the parents that affects the development of the children, even if this is identified as being purely negative, 'interdestruction' (244). Thomas Crich's position is one of inherent contradiction in which his devotion to Christian idealism sits uncomfortably with his possession of enormous material wealth through which temporal power accrues. As an industrial magnate he

seeks to fulfil his patriarchal role by running his mines as humanely as possible. However he is ultimately restrained by the realistic demands of industrial capitalism: 'He, the father, the patriarch, was forced to deny the means of life to his sons, his people' (253). Thomas Crich's idealisation of his miners is mirrored by Mrs. Crich's idolisation of her minors. Through a kind of mutual process of entropic decomposition enforced by the negative energy that subsists between the two, both lapse into an existential passivity, relinquishing their responsibilities and leaving Mrs. Crich to wander around the Shortlands wedding reception questioning exactly what her role as mother means. The deleterious effects of this relationship are revealed by the tragic destinies of the Crich children.

Lawrence then demonstrates a clear perception of the fact that family structures are culturally specific, imply different relationships to the community, and produce individually modulated forms of subjectivity. Having grasped this point it seems clear that what Lawrence's work points towards is not an outright rejection of the family but rather a critique of the nuclear family structure which produces the kind of hostile antagonism towards society that is expressed by Mrs. Durant in 'Daughters of the Vicar' and that encourages the kind of unhealthy stifling and excessively private relationships that are explored in *Sons and Lovers*. In *Aaron's Rod* Lawrence seems to suggest that the only practical alternative to the nuclear family within northern European culture is perhaps 'perfected singleness' (155). In the previous chapter I argued that for Conrad the family could be understood as a model for the community. As Lawrence's work develops, however, the family is increasingly constructed as the inhibitingly private realm in opposition to the energising public and masculine spirit of the community. The abnegation of the home in favour of the community is an ideal that appears in *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. As the example of Somers in *Kangaroo* makes plain, however, it is the European heritage, the 'instinct for authority' (28), that prevents man from committing himself to any communal project despite his transparent desire to immerse himself in society and not to be condemned to watch in his isolation from the outside, 'it was so different being in it, even on the edge of it, from looking at it from the outside' (96). Ironically

then the arch-individualist Lawrence, the virulent opponent of all communal values, is at the same time attracted to the idea of the group. Although, rather impractically, he seems to conceive of the group as an association of independent individuals.

Lawrence then sees the danger of the family as lying in its creation of a sustaining private world which tempts man away from his preeminently sociopolitical destiny. In 'Matriarchy' (1928) he invokes biblical images of locusts and floods to describe the modern predominance of women. He argues that 'the tight littleness of the family' has stifled man's social dimension, and insists that the home be left to women so that men may be free to satisfy their 'social cravings':

What ails me is the absolute frustration of my primeval societal instinct...I think societal instinct much deeper than sex instinct - and societal repression much more devastating. (*Letters* VI: 99)

Lawrence's letters of the late 1920's contain many statements testifying to his desire to escape the constriction of the closed safety of the family and venture into commitment towards some more communal existence:

I should love to be connected with something, with some few people in something. As far as anything *matters*, I have always been very much alone, and regretted it. But I can't belong to clubs, or societies, or Freemasons, or any other damn thing. So if there is, with you, an activity I *can* belong to, I shall thank my stars. But, of course, I shall be wary beyond words, of committing myself. (*Letters* V: 501)

What is noteworthy about this letter to Rolf Gardiner (July 1926) is that Lawrence's evident desire for connection is undercut by a suspicion of his inability to forgo the inviolability of his individuality that 'commitment' would necessarily involve. In *Kangaroo* Somers initially balks at his wife's development of relations with their neighbours but at the same time rebels against the isolation that his career as a writer has forced on him. He feels the need to act in the social arena, 'to struggle with men and the world of men' (77).

Quite clearly in his later works, Lawrence introduces a gender distinction between the home (the realm of women), and the community (the sphere of men). This distinction is politically inspired. It is not a naive accommodation of existing patriarchal structures but a positive endorsement of the quasi-religious authority of the father. It is also a construction of sex roles that Lawrence knew

was highly contentious. In *Patriarchal Precedents* Rosalind Coward shows how during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries debates about sex roles within the family were particularly fierce, involving the questioning of the relationship between the individual and the group, the public and the private. It is not surprising therefore that the position of the family should be an object of investigation for the writers of the time, especially as the ramifications of the debate continually widened:

This period saw the construction of very definite categories of masculinity and femininity, partly arising from state intervention to produce a household in which women could be responsible for the domestic, while men would participate in the public arena. (Coward 99)

Coward points out that these debates reached a peak in the 1920's. In *Kangaroo*, published in 1923, Lawrence admits elements of realism into the patriarchal vision which expose the fact that this form of social organisation, premised on a rigorous exclusionary gender distinction, means that man's performance in the public sphere is dependent on the drudgery of women in the private. Thus when Kangaroo tells Somers and his wife, Harriet, that in order to oppose the cold ants who have taken over the country he wants to 'collect together all the fire in all the burning hearts in Australia' (137), Harriet, comprehending what her role is in this vision, undermines Kangaroo's apocalypticism by domesticating his imagery:

"I shall make myself into a Fire Brigade, because I am sure you will be kindling fires all over everywhere, under the table and in the clothes-cupboard, and I, poor domestic wretch, shall have to be rushing to put them out. Being only a poor domestic female, I really don't feel safe with fires everywhere except in fire-places and in grates with hearths." (138)

Notwithstanding the contrapuntal voice of Harriet, *Kangaroo* does mark a movement in Lawrence's work of the 1920s towards a political analysis in which the family, rightly constituted as a patriarchal institution, is proposed as the model for society. Lawrence's political focus means that there is little investigation of the position of children and therefore of the dynamic interaction of the family unit. The family has no reality in *Kangaroo* other than as the expression of a political philosophy. It is certainly not the dynamic site of the development of this philosophy. Thus analysis of the political situation in Australia is reduced to the belief that the country is suffering from an anarchic

loss of authority that can only be restored through the reinvestiture of 'a quiet, gentle father who uses his authority in the name of living life' (126). Kangaroo calls the citizens of Australia 'my children' (147) and along with Jack Callcott repeatedly images the nation as a family to justify his ideal of political isolationism. At the opposite end of the political spectrum to the 'diggers', Struthers' socialists also understand that a nation exists in isolation if it constitutes itself as a family:

Our society is based on the family, the love of a man for his wife and his children, or for his mother and brothers. The family is our social bedrock and limit. Whitman said the next, broader, more unselfish rock should be the love of comrades. The sacred relation of a man to his mate, his fellow-man. (219)

In the face of these competing ideologies one laying emphasis on authority, the other on unfettered communality, both ministering to an element of Somers' desire, he abdicates the responsibility to choose and continues his journey towards a more harmonious combination of these opposing principles. Ultimately the marrying of these prescriptions can only be achieved under a new form of familial anti-familialism, the destruction of the family through the usurpation of its function by the state in the religion of Quetzalcoatl.

There is then a discernible movement in Lawrence's works that can be traced by attention to his representation of the family. In the early works, up to *Women in Love*, Lawrence's primary concern is with the psychological development of the individual, and the family is imaged, if ambivalently, as a restrictive force on this development. Unlike Conrad for instance, Lawrence constructs this repressiveness as a product of the family's natural antipathy to the community. Lawrence's approach in these works can be likened to the approach of psychoanalysis which looks at the family unit as productive of subjectivity. There are of course other ways of looking at the family. The anthropological approach of Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example, regards the family unit as existing in relation to other family units and therefore as being productive of society: 'marriage is not, is never, and cannot be a private business' ('The Family'). The 'alliance theory' of kinship and marriage renders the incest taboo a positive injunction that anchors the communicative necessities of every social system. Lawrence's view in his early works of the family as existing in polar opposition to the public world is a consequence of his

concern for the development of unfettered individuality, his psychological perspective.

However Lawrence's views are never straightforward and it is often the case that what appears, at the level of content, to be his ideological position is undercut by the way in which, at the level of form, the message is presented in the narrative. It is certainly not my intention to argue that at a conscious level Lawrence does not try to reinforce in the early works the notion that the public world of society and the private world of the family are radically dissimilar. However, at the same time Lawrence's texts reveal the adulteration of the purity of these two realms through the interpenetration of the public and the private, society and the family. Thus in the works of the early 1920's (*The Lost Girl*, *Aaron's Rod*, and *Kangaroo*) Lawrence turns his attention away from the psychological development of the individual and towards the political structure of society. In a sense, if Lawrence's early works suggested that the individual must escape from the bourgeois ideology of familialism, these later works imply that given the impossibility of escaping ideology the individual must act to change the current construction of society, or at least attempt to escape its deadening influence.

Ironically, establishing a radical separation of the family and society, as Lawrence does in the early works, plays directly into the hands of the Victorian apologists for the family. It was precisely because of this separation that they venerated the institution. The family could thus be seen as a privileged space immune to the diseases of its socio-cultural context. This is the image of the family as a haven providing a compensatory space to diffuse the alienating effects of capitalism. Christopher Lasch argues that this image is a chimera resting upon a naive assumption of the disconnection of the familial and the social realms that emerged as part of nineteenth century bourgeois ideology:

The concept of the family as a haven in a heartless world took for granted a radical separation between work and leisure and between public life and private life. The emergence of the nuclear family as the principal form of family life reflected the high value modern society attached to privacy, and the glorification of privacy in turn reflected the devaluation of work. (7)

However, in Lawrence's novels, even though they are critical of the family, a residue of that Victorian idealisation can still be found. Thus even in the same text there are often presented, contradictory but equally powerful, images of the family.

In the earliest of his novels, *The White Peacock*, Lawrence depicts a society based around nuclear family households in which the father of the narrator Cyril Beardsall is absent. It is the world dreamt of by Paul Morel in *Sons and Lovers* (130), cleansed of paternal presence (even in the name Beardsall), translated into the middle class and lived in a cottage in the country with the mother. What Lawrence does here is deform the power relations that underpin his culture and attempt to project a utopian environment defined as 'the country'; he sublimates the problem of how to integrate the authority of the father into the family without destroying its harmony. In *Sons and Lovers*, the Lievers family 'singing in a circle round the fire' (283) present a powerful image of the enclosed safety of the exclusive family group; yet it is also in this novel, the one in the Lawrence oeuvre most consciously aware of the pervasive influence of social and economic context, that the tension of this separation of the public and the private is most clearly revealed.

Walter Morel emblematises the impossibility of maintaining this separation between the public and the private worlds. He literally brings the work place back with him into the home, and the novel betrays an unconscious sympathy with the frustrations of his soul-destroying endeavour juxtaposed against the leisured pursuits of Paul as artist that are capable of netting him considerable financial reward. This point is made in the scene where Walter discovers that his son has just won first prize in the winter exhibition at Nottingham Castle and is emphasized by the narrative's references to Morel in this scene as 'the miner' or 'the collier':

There was silence. Morel stared at the sugar-basin instead of eating his dinner. His black arm, with the hand all gnarled with work, lay on the table. His wife pretended not to see him rub the back of his hand across his eyes, nor the smear in the coal-dust on his black face.
(313)

There is here an implicit comparison of the hands of the miner with the hands of the artist, and these hands deformed by the conditions under which they are

forced to labour are the objective correlative of the social deformity that the alienating conditions of industrial labour have foisted on Morel and thus inevitably on the whole household. The brutality of industrial capitalism infiltrates and distorts family relations and quashes the myth that the two realms are separable.

In *The Rainbow* Lawrence gives a strong sense of the family as a sanctuary through the image of the mother and child in the warmth and light watched by Tom Brangwen, the isolated, external individual. By the force of cumulative metaphorical association this image creates the sense of womb-like security in opposition to the dark chaotic forces of nature. However, it is also in this novel that Lawrence articulates the mutual antagonism of the public and private realms, an incompatibility demonstrated by the fact that Lydia has lost two children whilst she and her husband were away campaigning for a free Poland. This position is carried forward in *Women in Love* through Birkin who is Lawrence's most powerful spokesman against the anti-social privacy of the family:

The hot narrow intimacy between man and wife was abhorrent. The way they shut their doors, these married people, and shut themselves into their own exclusive alliance with each other, even in love, disgusted him. It was a whole community of mistrustful couples, and no further life, no further immediate, no disinterested relationship admitted: a kaleidoscope of couples, disjointed, separatist, meaningless entities of married couples. (223)

By the time of *Aaron's Rod* this conflict between the public and the private is openly expressed as the cause of tension within the family through Lottie's irritation that Aaron's union work should keep him away from home: ' " if you cared for your wife and children half what you cared about your union, you'd be a lot better pleased in the end"' (15). 'Union' here carries the full significance of its semantic range. In his later works Lawrence's advocacy of the need to break down the isolated privacy of the family as disruptive of the chief end of life which he conceived to be social becomes more and more determined.

If, as I have suggested, Lawrence's early works offer simultaneously two ideas of the family as both sustaining and threatening, then that is I think an ambivalence that is integral to the family form itself. Indeed in the description in

The Rainbow of the struggle between Tom Brangwen and Anna on the night that Lydia is giving birth (the 'birth-night scene') this ambivalence is given full expression. The struggle between Tom and Anna, which as Carol Sklenicka has observed is really a power struggle for control of the household, is deeply threatening to the linkage between home and womb carrying as it does underlying suggestions of violation and rape:

he reached his hand and grasped her. He felt her body catch in a convulsive sob. But he was too blind, and intent, irritated into mechanical action. He began to unfasten her little apron. She would have shrunk from him, but could not. So her small body remained in his grasp, while he fumbled at the little buttons and tapes, unthinking, intent, unaware of anything but the irritation of her. Her body was held taught and resistant, he pushed off the little dress and the petticoats, revealing the white arms. She kept stiff, overpowered, violated, he went on with his task. (113)

However, at the same time, it is through this struggle that Tom provides the frightened Anna with a sense of security so that eventually she clings to him: 'she freed her arm and put it round his neck, clinging soft and warm...' (116) and falls asleep. Indeed what one might regard as the disturbing overtones of this scene can to a certain extent be 'normalised' by reading it in conjunction with *Education of the People* in which Lawrence promotes as healthy, a vigorous antagonism between parents and children. He believes that parents should brook no indiscipline, that genuinely expressed anger is a good, and that the parent should retaliate spontaneously to the provocation of the child. Certainly the aftermath of the birth-night scene suggests that it has been productive in finally establishing the parental relationship at its proper level. It is the intense atmosphere of the home which breeds the destructive, possessive emotions of Anna articulated by the constantly reiterated 'I want my mother' plea. Anna's tie with her mother is 'normalised' by Tom's extracting her from the debilitating, selfish context of the privatised family and taking her outside into the darkness of the wider environment, the public world, the farm.

This, in miniature, is the lesson of *The Rainbow*, that for psychic health and development one needs to break out of the stifling enclosedness of the privatised family. In his introduction to the novel John Worthen identifies how the title of the second chapter 'They Live at the Marsh' defines the limited horizons of the married Brangwens: 'They were a curious family, separate from

the world, isolated, a small republic set in invisible bounds' (*The Rainbow* 142). This idea is further reinforced by two chapters titled 'The Widening Circle' which not only suggest movement beyond the immediate environment, but also contain implicitly the idea of entrapment, enclosure - the family circle, the wedding ring.

At the level of individual psychology this ambivalence towards the family is experienced by Lawrence's protagonists through their feeling the need to go beyond the world of the home and simultaneously their demonstration of a reluctance to forgo this sustaining context:

Her parents stood undiminished and unaware of criticism. The people she met outside seemed to begrudge her her very existence. They seemed to want to belittle her also. She was exceedingly reluctant to go amongst them. She depended upon her mother and father. And yet she wanted to go out. (*The Rainbow* 138)

Anna then, who is initially liberated by the relationship between Tom and Lydia and whose protection within the family unit is imaged by her sitting between her parents on their carriage, begins to feel the constraint of the closed family atmosphere. In the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1916-17, published in England in 1920) Freud argues that the desire to escape the family is universally experienced, it is only detachment from the parents that enables the child to become a member of the social community:

From this time onwards [following the development of the Oedipus complex], the human individual has to devote himself to the great task of detaching himself from his parents, and not until that task is achieved can he cease to be a child and become a member of the social community. (380)

However, I would argue that for modernist writers this task of detachment from the family is both more urgent - because it impinges on their life as artists and on the structure of their works, and more problematic - because in rejecting the family form, the individual who escapes from this structure has to create for himself his own way of living without benefit of historical models. This is of course a particularly problematic situation for women whose attempts to break free of familial structuration are constrained by the limits on their economic freedom. Thus in *The Rainbow* Lawrence traces the modulation into explicit rebellion of Anna Brangwen's initial ambivalence towards the family. He makes it a matter of 'escape' for her and thus a matter of imprisonment. Her mind

becomes fixated on the image of a torture cell which prevents one from being able to stretch out: 'she could feel the horror of the crampedness, as something very real' (143). The only escape available for Anna is via relationship and the entry into an alternative, but identical in its polarisation of private and public, family structure. Lawrence recognises that this involves a degree of self-denial, but says that with the deification of her role as mother this sacrifice is made 'with satisfaction' (238).

Of course in this conflict of desire between 'escaping' the home and remaining protected within it, the mother, at least in the early works of Lawrence, plays a vital role. Lawrence reveals in the psychological make-up of both Paul Morel and Anna Brangwen what might be thought of as the pre-Oedipal conflict between merger and separation in which the child desires return to the mother but senses that this would equate to destruction of the ego and therefore sees the mother as a hostile agent of death. Lawrence in fact notes the mother's fostering of the very dependency that is felt to be so dangerous to the development of a social individuality. Gertrude Morel is certainly not a passively innocent receptacle for her son's unsolicited attention. It is her lack, her need that demands the intensification of this affective bond; a desire that is actively pursued.⁶ Far from 'urging' her sons into life she seeks to bind them to her, 'she felt as if the navel string that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken' (74). Certainly as Paul grows into sexual maturity he begins to feel increasingly the restrictive, rather than the sustaining nature, of his mother's love:

Then sometimes he hated her, and pulled at her bondage. His life wanted to free itself of her. It was like a circle where life turned back on itself, and got no further. She bore him, loved him, kept him, and

6. Something of this is recognised by Freud in *Totem and Taboo*:
A woman whose psychosexual needs should find satisfaction in her marriage and her family life is often threatened with the danger of being left unsatisfied, because her marriage relation has come to a premature end and because of the uneventfulness of her emotional life. A mother, as she grows older, saves herself from this by putting herself in her children's place, by identifying herself with them; and this she does by making their emotional experiences her own. (67)

However, as I argued earlier, I do not think that Freud theorises the psychological effect on the children of this maternal activity.

his love turned back into her, so that he could not be free to go forward with his own life, really love another woman. (412)

This confining imprisonment of Paul in relation to his mother gives the penultimate chapter its ambiguous title. The 'release' of Mrs. Morel from her terrible death pains is also the release of Paul from his maternal subjugation into new life. Paul kills his mother by poisoning her milk, ~~What~~ the mother nourishes the child with, the child uses to kill the mother. In a scene strongly reminiscent of the close of *Le Père Goriot* (1834) Paul is left at the end of the novel not with 'the drift towards death', (as Lawrence described it in his famous letter to Edward Garnett), but on the contrary with the purposive re-entry into the 'humming, glowing' social community (492). In other words entry into the community is quite explicitly premised on escape from the family.

Lawrence's early works then articulate the theme of many nineteenth-century novels, that is the child's struggle for disconnection or detachment. Works such as *Le Père Goriot* and *Crime and Punishment* (1866) demonstrate the family's stalking of the protagonist of the novel. Rastignac and Raskolnikov almost inevitably find themselves entwined in a familial context even though at the outset they are liberated from their immediate family environments. What Lawrence's later novels, *Kangaroo*, *Aaron's Rod*, and *The Plumed Serpent* increasingly do is attempt to marginalise the family as incompatible with a full exploration of the possibilities of individuality. Having absorbed the realist intimation of the impossibility of escaping familial contextualisation Lawrence turns away from this form of fiction, he closes down the familial perspective and articulates the search for individuality in a self-absorbed, subjective prose. Whereas the nineteenth-century novels I have referred to above and Lawrence's earlier works were constructed along lines that rendered inescapable the thorough investigation of the relationship between the public and private spheres, Lawrence's later work attempts to forgo this exploration for a theoretical dogmatism.

The reason for Lawrence's move away from dramatising the individual's escape from the institution of the family may have had something to do with his growing perception that simply to break with the material family was insufficient to undermine its influence. Given the role of the family in transmitting the values

of society, its socialising function, the only way to fully counter its authority was either to re-imagine the family as operating upon a different basis and therefore as transmitting different values, or to attempt to ignore altogether the role of the family in the production of subjectivity. If then the emphasis placed on family socialisation in later texts is less pronounced, this marks not the culmination of Lawrence's thought on the family but its limit-point. To go beyond socialisation is impossible, to escape from it all Lawrence can do is ignore it.

Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* argues that the 'chief contribution' of the patriarchal family is 'the socialisation of the young (largely through example and admonition of their parents) into patriarchal ideology's prescribed attitudes' (35).⁷ Perhaps the most important of these prescribed attitudes is the belief in authority itself. In 'Authority and the Family' Max Horkheimer argues that the entire cultural apparatus in class society tends to promote a psychic structure that interiorises and rationalises physical coercion. The result of this is the natural belief in authority, the necessary superordination and subordination of classes that Horkheimer argues, has a central place throughout history. Given the ubiquitous status of authority in culture Horkheimer argues that it is very important to delineate it by an understanding of the whole nexus of relations through which it operates in a particular social structure.

Lawrence's work illustrates the validity of Horkheimer's prescription insofar as the major fault of his polemical texts lies in their insufficient attention to the context of a particular social structure. 'Take the Pueblo Indians of the Arizona desert' he says in 'Matriarchy' without pausing to consider the validity of deriving lessons from an alien culture. In the novels, however, despite the common perception that Lawrence is concerned simply with promoting the politics of authority, the shortcomings of this idea and its complexity and ambiguity are revealed under the pressure of its being placed within a specific context. The family is the empirical ground for this analysis of the functioning of

7. Christopher Lasch notes the implicit contradiction in the fact that the family was supposed to prepare children for the adult world (socialisation), whilst at the same time was set up for adults as being a refuge from this world, operating according to radically different laws and prescriptions (39).

authority in culture and as such, once again, it is the fulcrum for the most highly-charged personal and political issues that Lawrence engages with through his fiction. Thus whilst Lawrence's early fiction tends to run headlong into the problem of the internalisation of the mental structures of the family, its socialising function, the later work tries to avoid this issue by paying less attention to the internal dynamics of the family.

In his very first novel (as in his last), Lawrence makes the greenwood a refuge from the demands of society but even here, and even in a negative way, the family cannot avoid its social function bound up as it is with the development of the psyche. Annable's motto is 'Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct' (*The White Peacock* 224). He is an opponent of culture and civilisation: 'He was a man of one idea: - that all civilisation was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture' (224) and a promoter of the Lawrentian doctrine of fatherhood, 'forget your child as much as possible' (*Fantasia of the Unconscious* 93). However, even as Annable refuses to play his part in patriarchal society by transmitting the appropriate values through a demand from his children for obedience, it is clear that the family remains a key institution in the communication of values, the values of the father. Thus when his son Sam is confronted by authority, a policeman, he is unable to accommodate his demands. The significance of this confrontation lies not so much in the fact that Sam does not possess the 'correct' patriarchal values but in the fact that his values are simply those of the father. Annable has been unable to escape the patriarchal foundations of society. The actual values that he has passed on are secondary to the fact that they have been passed on and absorbed unquestioningly.

This kind of inescapable patriarchal authority ought to make the father at the head of the family a powerful figure. However, nowhere in Lawrence's realistic explorations of the family does this figure appear. This intimation of a lack of the proper patriarchal authority in society, revealed by Lawrence's early work, receives a theoretical, philosophical explanation in the works of the 1920's. In these works Lawrence makes very clear his belief that the socio-cultural degeneration of the contemporary world is the product of the erosion of the

father's proper authority and its replacement by the perverse and demeaning influence of the mother.

The traditional nineteenth century view of the repressive, all-powerful father was summed up by Samuel Butler who wrote in his *Notebooks*: 'Those who have never had a father, can at any rate never know the sweets of losing one. To most men the death of his father is a new lease of life' (100). The father looms large in the literature of the nineteenth century from *Eugénie Grandet* (1833) to *Washington Square* (1881). However, increasingly towards the turn of the century and in the early years of the new century there developed a sense, expressed for example in later James' novels such as *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897) and *The Ambassadors* (1903), that paternal authority was on the wane and it was now the power of the mother that needed to be addressed.

This orientation can be identified in the works of Joyce. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Stephen Dedalus is described as feeling sorry for his father, of actually feeling embarrassed by his lack of authority:

- O by the way, said Heron suddenly, I saw your governor going in.

The smile waned on Stephen's face. Any allusion made to his father by a fellow or by a master put his calm to rout in a moment. He waited in timorous silence to hear what Heron might say next. (76)

This vulnerability of the status of the father even appears in the works of writers who regarded patriarchy as the chief repressive force of contemporary civilisation. Thus Mr Ramsay's tyranny, if that is what it is, in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), is quite clearly based on weakness and emotional need. The picture of the father in modernist literature is therefore very different to that which emerged from Victorian novels. There are no Mr Gradgrinds in the modernist world view.

Lawrence's work develops a fierce attack on what he sees as the feminine seizure of power within the home and constructs compensatory narratives in which the authority of the father is re-imagined and the importance of the home and the family marginalized in his later work. In 'Matriarchy', for example, defeat is conceded within the home but tempered by the rejection of the importance of the family in favour of man's more pressing sociopolitical destiny.

By the close of his earliest novel the family is perceived as a battleground caused by the female arrogation of authority and sustained by the use of the children as the weapons of the mother. Meg in *The White Peacock* is 'secure in her high maternity; she was mistress and sole authority. George, as father, was first servant, as an indifferent father, she humiliated him and was hostile to his wishes' (419). Lawrence's response to this situation is to construct compensatory narratives in which he envisages the restoration of the true, pure potency of patriarchy that has been eroded in his generation. This is the difference incarnated in 'England, My England' (1915) between the 'son' Egbert and the 'father' Godfrey Marshall whose very name is redolent of an authority fully attested by his daughter Winifred who recognises 'the power of her father' (10), and 'the old, almost magical prestige of paternity' (16).

This seems a remarkable response given the context of the First World War and the reaction of other writers towards the exercise of the authority that led to that bloody conclusion. One thinks most obviously of Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero* and of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, both of which link the patriarchal system to the destruction of innocent lives. However, as far as Lawrence is concerned, the authority of the father is not a pathological manifestation of a particular social structure but rather demands the natural veneration owed to a spiritual well:

Let the psychoanalysts talk about father complex. It is just a word invented. Here was a man who had kept alive the old red flame of fatherhood, fatherhood that had even the right to sacrifice the child to God, like Isaac. Fatherhood that had life-and-death authority over the children: a great natural power. ('England, My England', 16)

It is interesting that this statement which amounts basically to a restatement of the position of Filmer in his *Patriarcha*, or a conception of the Roman *familia*, should have been written in the midst of the War. Lawrence doesn't see the significance of this conflict as the sacrifice of the sons by the fathers - which in any case would be legitimised through the reference to Isaac. He tends rather to see it as marking the diminution of paternal authority in the present generation, the loss of a deep and natural power. The early works up to *Women in Love* (and including 'England, My England') identify this situation. The novels of the early 1920's, *The Lost Girl*, and *Aaron's Rod*, attempt to

analyse its causes, whilst *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent* present alternative cultures which look towards the re-assertion of paternal potency.

The suspicion that the father has been deprived of his natural authority, particularly through the female annexation of his power, is a feeling that is upheld throughout Lawrence's oeuvre which is full of examples of deleterious matriarchal government. In *The Lost Girl* Alvina's life is an odyssey involving the throwing off of the power of at least three 'mothers', Miss Frost, Miss Pinnegar, and Madame Rochard. In 'St. Mawr' (1924) there is a close link between female authority and emasculation, Rachel Witt wields the scissors that cut Lewis's symbolically charged hair, just as St. Mawr himself is threatened with being neutered by Flora Manby. In *Aaron's Rod* the world of Sir William's household is ruled over by Lady Franks who objects to Aaron's resistance of her will. In 'Daughters of the Vicar' it is the absence of the mother that enables the grandmother, 'The Mater', to possess such autocratic authority. Will Brangwen in *The Rainbow* is described as serving the 'matriarchy' (250). In *The Plumed Serpent* Dona Carlota runs a Cuna, a children's home in which she fills the paternal role of naming the children (192).

Lawrence then doesn't just note the usurpation of the father's authority by the mother but attacks this situation in the most virulent terms:

She is now a queen of the earth, and inwardly a fearsome tyrant.
She keeps pity and tenderness emblazoned on her banners. But
God help the man whom she pities. Ultimately she tears him to bits.
(*Fantasia of the Unconscious* 99)

The most obvious incarnation of this spectre is Mrs. Morel who usurps the father's place even in the change of title from *Paul Morel*, to *Sons and Lovers*. From the very opening of the novel Mrs. Morel is linked to the fatally consuming feminine. She meets her eldest son William outside the Lion Wallace booth; a creature, a cat, that we are told has killed one man and maimed two others. The association that makes this a proleptic figure is clear. In a famous letter to Edward Garnett of November 1912 Lawrence makes Mrs. Morel indirectly responsible for the death of William, and certainly she is guilty of the 'maiming' of Paul and Walter Morel. However, as the scheme that I outlined above indicates, I do not believe that Lawrence is fully conscious at this stage of the

nature of the problems that his texts reveal. By the time of *Kangaroo*, however, I think it is fair to say that Lawrence has worked through an analysis of the relations operating in society and therefore that when Somers, after reading a description of tectonic activity and the number of lives that have been lost through the earth's swallowing its earthquake victims, reflects on the instability of 'mother earth' (187), Lawrence means this phrase to carry the weight of its literal meaning. Perhaps this is the ultimate example of what Judith Ruderman calls in her book on Lawrence 'the devouring mother'.

Clearly then Lawrence's obsession with the family persists throughout his work. It receives its most comprehensive and complex expression in the three central novels of the canon *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, and *Women in Love*. Thereafter ambiguity is sacrificed in favour of analysis and political evangelicism. The examination of the family is always for Lawrence part of a larger engagement with political issues. In the later novels, *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, and *The Plumed Serpent* there is a tendency for this general perspective to overwhelm the individual.

Through the subject of the family Lawrence works out his conception of the relationship between the personal and the political and his view of the nature of authority itself. The implications of the interactions between family and state power, between the public and the private, between the demands of society and the needs of the individual imbue Lawrence's work with its characteristic movement from the subjectively specific to the politically general. In the early play *The Daughter-in-Law* for instance, Joe constructs an argument aligning Minnie's right to go to Manchester, with the miners right to go on strike, without Luther or the bosses calling in 'scab labour'. In *Women in Love* Gerald makes an analogy between the family and the state to justify warfare. He seems to see existence as taking place within the Hobbesian state of nature and argues with Birkin that just as a family must make provision by striving with other families, so must a nation strive with other nations. The voicing of such opinions through Gerald renders them faintly absurd, but Lawrence makes similar assertions in his polemical works, identifying the family in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' (1930) as a type of monarchy: 'Man and wife, a king

and queen with one or two subjects, and a few square yards of territory of their own' (502).

In *Kangaroo* the eponymous 'hero' is the spokesman for an authoritarian style of government which he makes analogous with the family ruled over by 'a quiet and gentle father' (126). In *The Plumed Serpent* Don Ramón stands at the head of a new cultural-political movement and is the incarnation for Kate Leslie of 'real fatherliness' (225). In fact as Lawrence's work develops through his so-called 'leadership period' his increasing commitment to a political perspective often seems to collapse the subjectively individual dimension of the novel (which might be said to be its generic specificity) and make everything resonate with an emblematic political significance. Thus in *The Lost Girl* Manchester House can be seen as a symbol of the decline of England caused by James Houghton's abdication of his role as leader and in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' Lawrence claims that Clifford Chatterley is an emblem for 'the deeper emotional or passional paralysis, of most men of his sort or class today' (514).

In view of the fact that the family is the focus in Lawrence's work for an increasingly authoritarian examination of the power relations operative within society it might be worth noting the degree to which Lawrence's texts nevertheless problematise any notion that they simply accommodate authoritarianism. Anne Fernihough has argued that whilst politically Lawrence may have been committed to an authoritarian ideology, textually his work represents an assault on the logocentric attempt through mimetic language to tie external reality down to a fixed authoritative single 'reading' (4). In other words the very notion that Lawrence promotes a single unimpeachable authority is disturbed by his own texts' parading a profound recognition of the slippage between signifier and signified, and the plurality of readings that may exist in this space. This idea that the form of the text may carry as much significance in political terms as its explicit content is something that will be fully explored in the next two chapters.

It has been clear throughout this chapter and in the progress of the thesis as a whole the extent to which the interaction of the novel and the family is pressurised by the impinging of patriarchy. An attempt has been made to complicate the received opinion about Lawrence's cultural conservatism by highlighting the radical openness of his early novels and the way in which his politics develops across his oeuvre through his consideration of the family. At the same time it is undeniable, however much the unconscious of the texts themselves might refute this, that at a surface level Lawrence directs his assault on the family to its erosion of the authoritarian status of the father. It is now necessary to address this issue directly by looking at the way in which Woolf's work attacks precisely the patriarchy that Lawrence attempts to uphold. The final chapter, an analysis of Joyce's work will demonstrate the culmination of this anti-patriarchal impetus, the achievement of a point of supercession by a new 'feminine' discourse that doesn't require the backing of the family in order to generate authority.

IV

Patriarchy and the Family: The Novels of Virginia Woolf

Woolf's work focuses on the confrontation between the individual, particularly the female individual and society. This confrontation is generated by a perception of the invalidity of social conventions once the ethical bases of society are called into question. When the truth of these public foundations can no longer be assumed, the individual is led to question and create her place in the world by forging her own values. However, in common with the dialectic characteristic of much modernist writing Woolf places the excavation of internal states of being within a structure that problematises both the diachronic and synchronic separateness of the individual. It is the purpose of this chapter to address the conflict of these perspectives in relation to Woolf's depiction and understanding of the family and its structuring of power relations, patriarchy, which acts as a crucible for these contentions.

Woolf's critique of patriarchy, which this chapter will explore, focuses on both its political and its economic aspects. Whereas agitation for women's rights in the nineteenth century, for example in such works as John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women* (1860), had largely concentrated on redressing legal inequalities based on gender difference, Woolf's attention is at least equally focused on the economic disequilibrium that had survived the rectification of some of the legal wrongs identified by Mill. Thus in her most extended non-fictional investigation of the politics of patriarchy, *Three Guineas* (1938), Woolf describes as a landmark in female history not the right to vote, but the right to earn one's living in the professions:

You object that to depend upon a profession is only another form of slavery, you will admit from your own experience that to depend upon a profession is a less odious form of slavery than to depend upon a father. (173)

She cites the case of Sophia Jex-Blake who was frustrated in her efforts to pursue her chosen profession by her father and then by the Royal College of Surgeons, as emblematic of this exclusion, 'of the great Victorian fight between the victims of the patriarchal system and the patriarchs, of the daughters against the fathers' (246).

Woolf's view that the repressiveness of the family institution stifled the possibility of women acquiring an income and therefore being in a position to wield economic power for the advancement of their sex is also powerfully expressed in her ostensibly aesthetic lectures published as *A Room of One's Own* in 1929. There Woolf states quite categorically that the economic lot of women can only be improved through access to education but 'to endow a college [by and for women] would necessitate the suppression of families altogether' (28). Woolf's work then constitutes an investigation of the validity of the syllogism: women are suppressed by the family system; for their own benefit and that of society women need to escape from that suppression; therefore the family must be destroyed.

This investigation of patriarchy would seem to involve a fairly straightforward narrative of opposition to the family system. However, patriarchy underpinned the whole culture. There is no obvious sense in which escape from the family can be achieved without either reconstructing that culture or risking the kind of alienation within it that was investigated by Conrad and Lawrence. Woolf's work then shares the modernist ambivalence towards society, and as in the case of Lawrence, the family can at times be presented by Woolf as offsetting a sense of isolation and alienation in the wider society.

That sense of isolation, it is clear from the previous two chapters, is one of the cardinal social facts that energised the thinking about subjectivity of modernist writers. It can be seen to stem from a shift in social organisation from the individual unit to the collective structure. This movement was orchestrated in large part by the expansion of the control of central government which

accelerated during the late Victorian period.¹ What these previous chapters have shown is the complexity of the affective relations that these changes produced. To understand the expansion of government as simply a chipping away at the private realms of the individual would be to oversimplify. It amounted to structural centralisation at the expense not only of individual freedoms but also organic community organisations that had traditionally defended these rights. As a consequence, as modernism testifies, forms of individualism were actually produced by these conformitive pressures. Nevertheless it is undeniable that modernist writers experienced a threatening sense of the loss of the authenticity of the self in the midst of mass society. That is one of the reasons why styles of individualism were fetishized. Clearly this threat was experienced differently according to each writer's position in relation to government and society.

This chapter then will need to examine not only Woolf's relationship to the family but also her understanding of the relationship of the individual to society in general. It is by looking at these two dimensions simultaneously that one can appreciate the complications involved in opposing the patriarchal system. For if the family was part of the problem in respect of the production of forms of subjectivity it could also be understood as part of the solution in providing the individual with a refuge from the alienation of the wider society. The fact that there is a degree of ambivalence in Woolf's attitude towards the family is, as we have seen from the previous two chapters, in accordance with the character of a great deal of modernist literature. Nor does this admission of the positive aspects of family life mark Woolf out from her female contemporaries. In Rosamond Lehmann's *Dusty Answer* (1927) for example, the heroine Judith experiences a feeling of alienated isolation: 'I am lost, lost, abandoned, alone, lost' (108) only as a result of her disconnection from the two sustaining narratives of home and family. It is only after the death of her father and her removal to Cambridge that Judith feels abandoned and at a loss in the world.

Alienation and isolation are always to some extent unavailable in the family which insists on the proximity of relationship and points to the extension of that

1. This observation is made for instance by José Harris (11).

relation into the past. Conrad's novels are imbued with the danger consequent upon the absence of the tradition of family. Without such a tradition what is left is a world of shifting values and moral ambiguity. Despite his opposition to all communal structures, Lawrence's early work also gives powerful expression to the feelings of protection and safety engendered by the family in the context of a hostile universe. Woolf's work navigates between an intellectual sense of the complicity of the family in the oppressive regime of patriarchy and a more visceral appreciation of the safety of the very bondage it imposes. We should perhaps therefore not be surprised that Woolf recognises the powerful pull of the family system even at the same time as she labours to undo its harmful consequences.

The question that Woolf's work struggles with is how to be oneself in a culture that is avowedly patriarchal? It is a question that is posed in Woolf's very first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), by Helen Ambrose to Rachel Vinrace who answers none too convincingly:

"I can be m-m-myself," she stammered, "in spite of you, in spite of the Dalloways, and Mr Pepper, and Father, and my Aunts, in spite of these?" She swept her hand across a whole page of statesmen and soldiers. (75)

This leads to further, related questions: how can a woman throw off her culturally sanctioned identity and yet still retain her sense of self? At the same time how can she *not* reject the cultural oppression of patriarchy and still retain her sense of identity? It is out of this double bind that Woolf promotes the integrity of the inner life. She does so in the face of the erosion of private space by the encroachment of the Edwardian state.

The state-sponsored expansion of public health and medical science into the previously sacrosanct private realm of the family has been commented on recently by José Harris and is also discussed by Samuel Hynes in *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*. Both these historians of the Edwardian period agree that this drive to monitor the physical and spiritual condition of the population was a result of the widespread fear following the humiliation of the Boer War that the English race had degenerated spiritually and morally. A consequence of this new official intrusiveness was a greater emphasis on the practice of

maternity so that bad motherhood was no longer perceived as an individual failure, but as 'subversive of community, nation, empire, and race' (Harris 80).

This politicisation of the personal and familial, this authoritative sanctioning of specific modes of behaviour based on the values of patriarchy, triggered a reaction giving rise to forms of individualism that were activated in response to this conformist pressure. Both Lawrence and Woolf can be understood as responding to the public invasion of private life by developing concepts of the integrity of inwardness. However, whereas Lawrence sees withdrawal into the self as a necessary step on the path towards achieving a new set of values which will articulate the truth for modern man, Woolf's opposition is more fundamental. Her animosity is produced not so much by the inadequacy of a particular set of values but by the attempt to impose them on others and thus to violate individuality by demanding conformity to an arbitrary ideology that closes down difference.

All Woolf's novels deal with the problematics of subjectivity in patriarchal culture but it is in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) that this investigation and validation of inwardness is given its most detailed expression. Clarissa Dalloway is valorised for having an openness that differentiates her from all the dogmatists (and there are many) in the novel: the doctors, Bradshaw and Holmes; the governess Miss Kilman; the colonial administrator Peter Walsh; and the official Hugh Whitbread, all of whom seek to impose their vision of the world on others. She represents the value of privacy, the protection of the soul, and is placed in opposition to those who represent the dogmatism of communal values. For example, Woolf's assault on the medical profession in the novel is premised not only on her discernment of the agency of this institution in the workings of patriarchy but also on her awareness of its outrageous opposition to, and deformation of individuality. In much the same way as the works of R.D. Laing and phenomenological psychoanalysis challenge the ascription of madness in the context of a society governed by no logically consistent principle of morality, and argue that what is defined as insanity is a form of behaviour that has meaning from the perspective of the individual rather than from that of society, Woolf characterises madness in *Mrs Dalloway* as the outraging of society's norms, the

same norms that not only condemn women to ineffectual inactivity but men to mass destruction and which are therefore bereft of any moral ballast. Miss Kilman's allegiance to movements and groups seems to exist to the detriment of her personal qualities: 'religious ecstasy made people callous (so did causes)' (12). Although this thought is attributed to Clarissa I think that the unredeemed dehumanisation of the presentation of Miss Kilman allows us to project Woolf's approbation onto the sentiment.

On the surface it would seem that Woolf is attempting to strike a difficult balance in the figure of Clarissa between openness and privacy. Ultimately I think Woolf's point is that without the ability to retreat into a private space the self becomes the dogmatic expression of social conformity. This is not a point that Woolf identifies as gender specific. For her, unlike for Lawrence, it is as important for men as it is for women that they should have the capacity to withdraw in order more fully to be themselves. This need to carve out a private space for the self as a refuge from the demands of the public sphere is not then restricted to the female characters in Woolf's novels. It is also experienced by men, especially of the lower middle-class who are likewise powerless to disconnect themselves from the demands of society. In *Night and Day* (1919), Woolf's second novel, this feeling of struggle with the family, and the refuge offered by the room of one's own is felt by Ralph Denham, 'every one of his actions...had been won from the grasp of the family system' (22). Woolf's use of the word 'system' indicates what Ralph is up against, a practice reinforced by social and cultural convention with its own rules and procedures; to step outside these boundaries is to confront one's society and culture, its value-system, head-on. The 'room of one's own' is an overturning of the conventional value-system of patriarchy; it is the antithesis of the communal ethic of family life.

In view of this approbation of withdrawal Woolf enables us to read positively a situation in *Mrs Dalloway* in which whilst Richard Dalloway is in the House (actually constructing that society from which it is necessary to withdraw) Clarissa is in the attic reading Baron Marbot's *Memoirs* about Napoleon's retreat from Moscow (29). This retreat imagery is reclaimed by Clarissa; her withdrawal is not passive escape into dependence, but positive nurturing of individuality. It

is easy to read in a negative way the disparity between the modernist heroes of the work of Joyce and Conrad heroically breasting life and risking their being in the confrontation, compared to the self-immuring of Woolf's protagonists. These figures, and they include male characters in Woolf's work such as Septimus Warren Smith are aware of the difficulty of defining any kind of authentic existence in a society totally compromised by patriarchy. Consequently the only validation for the self lies in defending the internal, the private, against the appropriations of an intrusive externality. This, I think, is an ethical principle that can be found in all Woolf's work. In *Night and Day*, for example, Katherine Hilbery acts to safeguard her privacy by keeping her private enthusiasms secret from the family (42). Her passion for mathematics is in itself a rejection of the family tradition (poetry) and therefore an assertion of her individuality. Like Clarissa, Katherine is wedded to a commitment to inwardness and privacy:

The only truth which she could discover was the truth of what she herself felt...she had no choice but to make this her guide through the dark masses which confronted her. (328)

She recognises that there are rules enshrined by the patriarchal tradition to govern her behaviour but that these do not relate to her as an individual but to her 'classification', her status as an unmarried woman. She determines to reject the course prescribed by popular opinion and to follow her own path towards an existentially validated freedom.

Woolf sees the threat to self-identity as both internal (family) and external (society), and considers that one needs to remain vigilant in opposing the appropriations of both structures. It is because she is assiduous in carving out her private space that ultimately Clarissa Dalloway seems far less subject to patriarchal positioning than the youthful rebel Sally Seton, apostle of sexual freedom, who is now defined by the patriarchally authorised condition of mother to sons (Clarissa, of course, has a daughter).

As a novelist Woolf's philosophy demands a burrowing inward into character, rather than the construction of character from external detail. This writerly concern with inwardness becomes projected onto characters who are presented as intensely self-conscious. Self-consciousness enables the writer to reveal the

individuality of the subject so that in the case of Mrs Dalloway the reader's privileged access to this consciousness allows a glimpse of the defence that she erects to protect herself from the conformitive demands of society and in particular her family. Despite the apparent irresistibility of her socio-cultural placing Mrs Dalloway remains inviolate as an individual. However, self-consciousness is certainly no cast-iron guarantee against the encroachment of the world. If one compares Mrs Dalloway to characters in the Woolf oeuvre who are less firmly fixed in their socio-cultural location, for example Rhoda in *The Waves* (1931), then one might suspect that Woolf is promoting the idea that individuality can only safely be established from a position of cultural security.

The vulnerability of the unfixed subject is accentuated by the powerless condition of woman in patriarchal society. To insert herself into this narrative, to 'fit' is to collude in her own exploitation. Thus in *The Voyage Out*, the experienced Helen Ambrose tries to discourage the young Rachel Vinrace's culturally determined self-denigrating instincts. To facilitate Rachel's development Helen wishes to provide her with space and time to think, that is to remove her from the disabling context of proximity to her father and the collective memory of her mother. She recognises the desirability of her niece's having a private room:

a room cut off from the rest of the house, large, private - a room in which she could play, read, think, defy the world, a fortress as well as a sanctuary. Rooms, she knew, became more like worlds than rooms at the age of twenty-four. (112)

The private room is valorised by Woolf as being an escape from the depredations of patriarchal culture. It is a place where the self has the opportunity to find its own identity by preventing the infringement of the public into the private. In this way its sealed-off privacy might be said to affront the patriarchally oriented narrative that produces meaning through public resonance. What it also suggests is the possibility that subjectivity might be produced independently of historical and social forces.

In examining the social and cultural models that constrain character, Woolf and other modernist writers are led to look critically at the individual's relationship to the community. For the Victorians the world was understood through history

conceived as being the biographies of great men. Leslie Stephen's *Dictionary of National Biography*, which was begun in 1882 the year of Woolf's birth, can be seen as the culmination of this view of history. It is the view that Thomas Carlyle sets out in the introductory words to his first *Lecture on Heroes* delivered in 1840: 'Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here' (185). This is a view of history that Woolf explicitly rejects. Ralph Denham in *Night and Day* deplores the inhibiting pressure of this veneration and debunks the notion of greatness that it upholds. He sees the Hilbery ancestral 'grotto'/'shrine' as an oppressive class specific commitment to tradition:

No, we haven't any great men...I'm very glad that we haven't. I hate great men. The worship of greatness in the nineteenth century seems to me to explain the worthlessness of that generation. (15)

Ralph is not subject to any of the doubts that assail Katherine whose family tradition has already surpassed any achievement she can accomplish.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* is the anti-novelistic expression of an individualistic conception of history. Precisely the form of history that *Orlando* (1928), *The Years* (1937), and *Between the Acts* (1941) question and undermine. Indeed the emergence of new social and cultural discourses in the late nineteenth century, in particular anthropology, reinforced the sense that history should be understood less as the biography of great men and more as the collective narrative of mankind.

It would, however, be misleading to suggest that Woolf is committed wholeheartedly and exclusively to this communal vision of history. She is capable of defending simultaneously the communal, as she does in her examination of the social, economic, cultural and historical forces that act on the family in *The Years* and in her denigration of the egoism of Joyce's work, whilst importing what seems to be something very like an existential validation of private experience in her exploration of character - and this even in texts which seem to uphold the communal perspective.

Woolf's commitment to the individual does not stem from a validation of the role the individual has to play in history. It is an existential commitment that situates

the individual beyond, or at least outside of, the valorised realm of patriarchal history. This raises the question of whether the presentation of character in Woolf's work can be seen as an assault on patriarchy, or whether it is a compensatory narrative validating sociopolitical impotence. This is the familiar problem of the political commitment of existentialism that Sartre's *Existentialism and Humanism* (1947) attempts to deal with. It is a problem that throws into question the contention of some commentators to identify Woolf as a politically committed and potent social critic.² Critics of existentialism often put forward the argument that it is a philosophy which rests on political quietism and therefore contains a tacit acceptance of injustice:

The resulting movement to a radical inwardness and its expression of authenticity, freedom, etc., is an attempt to actualise these ideals outside of the objective social context: to fulfil heroic cultural models independent of the society. (Schroyer xv)

The obvious response to this critique in the case of Woolf, emphasized in the stand she takes towards war in *Three Guineas*, is that all positions have political resonance and her withdrawal from the battleground constructed by the state in order to nurture an inwardness of integrity is a manoeuvre as designed to have political implications as any form of activism.

Woolf's preoccupation with inwardness can therefore be read as a political act of defiance, a rejection of the value system of the patriarchal state and a promotion of a truth that does not have to be externally validated. This translates in Woolf's work into a marginalisation of external relations and events (Mrs. Ramsay's, Andrew Ramsay's and Prue Ramsay's deaths are all reported in brackets in *To the Lighthouse*). At the same time it means that Woolf is particularly sensitive to the way in which ideologically dictated forms of behaviour are internalised as natural, as they clearly are, for example in May Sinclair's *The Life and Death of Harriet Frean* which I discussed in the introduction. This means that Woolf understands the structure of the family as not only lying outside the individual replicated in society's institutions, but as

2. This is the view of Jane Marcus (1987) and also of Suzette Henke (1981) who argues that Woolf is firmly committed to 'feminist, pacifist, and socialist principles' (125).

also being internal, introjected.³ In *Three Guineas*, Woolf argues that the most pressing struggle for women is not with external obstacles but with the false notions and ideals that they have interiorised from an oppressive ideology; and in an earlier essay, 'Professions for Women' (1933),⁴ she talks of the need for the woman writer to deal with her inner 'ghosts', to find a representation of her body which is not based on the false ascription given to it by the other, by man. Again in 'Women Novelists' (1930) Woolf addresses the problem for the woman writer not only of subverting the expectations of others as to what is appropriate to the sex, but also overcoming the tyranny of her own sexed nature; the quietism and repression of deep feeling that gives novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* a distinctly anti-Dostoevskyan cast in their appreciation of the depths of reserve, acceptance, resignation and compliance that society exacts: 'I am alone for ever, she thought, folding her hands upon her knee' (43).

The existential dimension of Woolf's work insofar as this can be understood as a radical commitment to the truth of the private self is an assertion that value is internal. It is an affront to the value system of patriarchy which promotes exterior space, society, as the realm in which the individual forges his identity and therefore produces value. Woolf privileges interior space, thought rather than action, as the productive environment of the individual. Therefore, in attending to submerged, occluded states, the psychological interior examined through the interior monologue, Woolf is challenging the patriarchal value-system, its oculocentrism that cherishes the visible, the surface, the energetic.

In *To the Lighthouse* the triangle of darkness that emblemizes Mrs. Ramsay in Lily Briscoe's painting is an assertion of steadfast solidity and also a representation of an impenetrable privacy and self-sufficiency. In what sense, after all, does a mathematical symbol, a square, a circle, or indeed a triangle

3. This idea is expressed in R.D.Laing's *The Politics of the Family* where he argues that the 'family' is constituted by the interiorised relations of its members.

4. References to Woolf's essays and book reviews are generally taken from *A Woman's Essays* (1992). Where that is the case subsequent page number references will be to that volume and will be marked as (1992, pn). Other sources will be identified as appropriate.

require anything further for its completion? It is anti-dynamic, an antithesis to the heroic ideals of motion and transparency, the postures of action which are simultaneously marked out and undermined by Mr Ramsay's repetitive recitation of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', always already inscribed with the motif of futility.

The critique of action is extended in Woolf's work through the death of the archetypal, quasi-Arthurian hero, Percival in *The Waves*. Percival encapsulates the heroic patriarchal ideal and yet he dies inconsequentially as a result of falling off his horse. Louis recognises the danger of the authority of Percival, the leader, as involving a consequential submergence of individuality: 'Look now how everybody follows Percival...look at us trooping after him, his faithful servants, to be shot like sheep' (26). It is the complete unselfconsciousness of Percival that constitutes his attraction. His authority in patriarchal society is derived from his very lack of inwardness. He is denied a voice in the text because speech implies reflection and mediation, and Percival is the unadulterated essence of action and activity. The narrative itself points up the futility of this emphasis on 'action' or 'event' by framing the novel with the timelessness of the sun rising and the waves breaking on the shore.

Again, in *Orlando*, the hero cuts a comic figure as a man of action in the opening part of the book. He dreams of fighting but actually replaces his sword with his pen (13), he faints when angered by Sasha (37), and as a Jacobean he decides to define himself in contradistinction to his forebears not through battling the Turk, but by battling the language and achieving literary, not military, fame and glory. In this enterprise Orlando is in collusion with the narrator who deconstructs the conventions of history by making a pause of more significance than 'many acts which bring men to their knees and make rivers run with blood' (55).

It is clear then that a major strand of Woolf's offensive against patriarchy is directed towards a dethroning of those values that are unthinkingly elevated in society. However, in this process the discovery of the baselessness of those

values shatters the integrity of a culturally verified identity and courts the possibility of the madness of the revolutionary by placing the self outside the social symbolic structures of the culture.

Woolf's devaluation of action and concern with inwardness is both a critique of patriarchy and a defence against it. It goes to the heart of her existential construction of character. That there is an existential dimension to Woolf's understanding of her characters and her commitment to the value of their inwardness and self-consciousness, is fully attested by an essay she wrote in 1924, around the time of *Mrs Dalloway*, entitled 'Montaigne'. In it Woolf describes Montaigne's ethos in existential terms that also sound very similar to ideas promulgated by Nietzsche. She stresses three aspects of Montaigne's work: firstly, the necessity to live according to the demands of the self and to abjure the conformitive demands of society:

He ['the man who is aware of himself'] alone lives, while other people, slaves of ceremony, let life slip past them in a kind of dream. Once conform, once do what other people do because they do it, and a lethargy steals over all the finer nerves and faculties of the soul. (1992, 58)

This is the duty that the unmarried Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* owes herself, not to bow to the pressure to get married, but to 'urge her own exemption from the universal law; plead for it; she liked to be alone; she liked to be herself' (50).

Secondly Woolf finds in Montaigne the familiar Nietzschean distinction between the community-orientated individual and 'l'âme bien née' who alone has the capacity to face the truth. This is the source of Mr. Ramsay's hypocrisy in *To the Lighthouse*. He insists on others facing the truth, disposing with illusions however painful this process might be, but at the same time he cannot do without Mrs. Ramsay to lean upon, to shield him from this very encounter with reality. He elicits sympathy as his patriarchal due and when Lily Briscoe fails to accommodate his demands she understands the status this accords her in the cultural psyche, 'a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid presumably' (142). The final adverb articulates the gap between Lily's and society's perceptions.

Finally Montaigne, in Woolf's reading, stresses the paramount importance of communication:

Communication is health; communication is truth; communication is happiness. To share is our duty; to go down boldly and bring to light those hidden thoughts which are the most diseased; to cancel nothing; to pretend nothing. (1992, 62)

It is clear then that in her reading of Montaigne Woolf picks out those aspects of his work that were particularly pertinent to the modernist project.

What is interesting about Woolf's essay on Montaigne is not just that it reveals her commitment to a set of values that could be described as existentialist but that it emphasizes in Montaigne's work those elements that are of particular relevance to Woolf and to modernism more generally. At the same time as Woolf is asserting the value of a quasi-existential view of character she is simultaneously constructing a narrative of connection; creating a tradition that ties her work to that of a culturally authoritative forebear. The essay on Montaigne is thus akin to the archeology of a female literary line. The construction of literary analogues seems to have been an integral part of Woolf's literary project. Indeed in *The War of the Words* Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar fully explore this construction of literary lineages through the concept of 'affiliation':

the idea of affiliation, as we propose to use it, suggests an evasion of the inexorable lineage of the biological family...Unlike "influence", then, which connotes an influx or pouring-in of external power, and "authorship", which stands for an originary primacy, the concept of affiliation carries with it possibilities of both choice and continuity. Choice: one may consciously or not decide with whom to affiliate - align or join - oneself. Continuity: one is thereby linked into a constructed genealogical order which has its own quasi-familial inevitability. (1: 171)

They suggest, using Freud's 'Female Sexuality' (1931) as a paradigm, that in the early twentieth century, for the first time, both matrilineal and patrilineal paths were open to women writers. The three paths of psychosexual development noted by Freud can be translated into literary choices thus: normatively (for Freud) the female artist rejects the literary mother and aligns herself with the tradition of the father; or she frigidly rejects both allegiances and eschews aesthetic ambition altogether; or thirdly and deviantly she claims a maternal tradition. Gilbert and Gubar argue that with the growing perception in

the late nineteenth century of the weakening of patriarchal authority women writers increasingly turned towards their female precursors.

I have prefaced this discussion of Gilbert and Gubar with Woolf's essay on 'Montaigne' because, although I agree with their emphasis on affiliation, I think their stress on the gender politics of modernism misses two vital points. Firstly, as Woolf's use of Montaigne shows, modernist women writers were not subject to a simple choice of either identifying empowering female forebears or submitting to the authority of the patrilineage. The shattering of the hegemony of patriarchal culture which Gilbert and Gubar convincingly demonstrate throughout their three volume work actually enabled female writers such as Woolf to adopt 'strong' readings of their male forerunners. Woolf does not feel her work constrained by the influence of Montaigne, she uses Montaigne for her own expressive purposes. This is a far greater statement of female confidence and authority than the kind of ambiguous relationship to 'the four great [female] novelists' that Gilbert and Gubar draw attention to (198). At the same time, male modernist writers draw on female literary precursors as a way likewise of defining their anti-patriarchal stance. Most obviously one can see this in the handing down of the *Letters of Madame de Sévigné* from the grandmother to the writer in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

Secondly, I would suggest that Gilbert and Gubar are wrong to contrast 'affiliation' as a female construction of the past with 'influence' as a male construction:

male literary history functions like a biological family...For women, however, female genealogy does not have an inexorable logic because the literary matrilineage has been repeatedly erased, obscured, or fragmented. (199)

It is surely a facet of Gilbert and Gubar's arguments elsewhere that it is precisely the patrilineage in the late nineteenth century that is subject to the threats of erasure, obscurity, and fragmentation. I would argue that male modernist writers are as likely as their female counterparts to turn away from the biological family as a model for literary history and towards affiliation as a principle for understanding both the nature of their work and the structuring of their texts.

Turning from this question of literary lineages I do not wish to leave the impression that I regard Woolf's excavation of her female forebears as unimportant. There is no question that Woolf's outlook is informed by a perception of women as being 'outsiders'. In *Three Guineas*, for example, she talks of the need for women to maximise their impact by remaining outside of the structures of society that have traditionally constrained them, and experimenting 'with private means in private' (321). However, this validation of distance or separation from a compromised society represents a marked change from her attitude in *A Room of One's Own* in which she describes the dangers of this outsider status as leading to an over-emphasis on self-consciousness. In the earlier work Woolf's feminism is problematised by the fact that she often speaks of the need to remain impersonal as an artist, not to allow grievance to distort the work or consciousness of identity difference to enter it: 'Consciousness of self, of race, of sex, of civilisation - ...[has] nothing to do with art' ('American Fiction', published in *The Moment* 1947). She argues that feminine anger must be controlled, indeed she even goes so far as to present an ideal overcoming of artistic sexual difference in the Coleridgean concept of a unified creative mind, androgyny. At this stage Woolf's principal preoccupation is with an ungendered opposition to the universal tyranny of the patriarchal state:

it is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex...It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance; to plead even with justice any case; in any way to speak consciously as a woman. (*A Room of One's Own* 134)

She is led into this argument by wishing to distinguish a literary practice from that, infused with anger, that characterises male writing about women, typified by Professor Von X 'jab[bing] his pen on the paper as if he were killing some noxious insect as he wrote' (40). Woolf struggles to understand the source of this anger when it is so obvious that 'England is under the rule of a patriarchy' (43).

In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf takes Shakespeare's works as exemplifying the products of a poet unencumbered by his personality (73), whereas Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is condemned for sustaining a level of indignation that

outrages the smoothness of the book's aesthetic (90). Woolf's demand at this time is for complete autotelic sufficiency, she wants the production of an artefact encased in a realm of pure creation, cut off from the intrusive concerns of political reality (this is part of her critique of the Edwardian novelists in 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown'). However by 1938 and *Three Guineas*, Woolf's attitude has changed, the anger that she thought it so important to control in *A Room of One's Own* is now given full rein as she recognises the necessity to murder the Angel in the House in order to preserve the writer.

One way of doing that, which was of course fundamental to carving out the space in which the writer could breathe, was to challenge the determinism of the family narrative. In the nineteenth century the only escape route from the family was via the marriage resolution which one finds in many novels of that time from *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) to *Middlemarch* (1871). It is the limit of Susan Warrington's ambition in *The Voyage Out*, 'the solution required by everyone she knew' (164) and is also the inescapable narrative structure that Rachel Vinrace finds herself trapped within in that novel. Rachel denies that she will marry and asks Clarissa Dalloway why people do, Clarissa replies "'That's what you're going to find out'" (51), as if this is the unavoidable path that she and the book are now embarked upon. However, if women appear to be constrained by a single, unavoidable narrative, there is again a sense in Woolf's work that men too will struggle to avoid a similarly determined structuration. The young men of *Jacob's Room* (1922) 'will soon become fathers of families and directors of banks' (210). Jacob Flanders is then just as imprisoned in the patriarchal system as any woman. He does not return from the war. His fate is contained in his name. His cultural position as a young and militaristic member of the middle classes means that there is literally no other destiny for him other than death in battle.

In *Mrs Dalloway* there is a particularly strong sense in which patriarchal society produces an oppressive narrative which demands conformity or death. Clarissa's sister Sylvia never makes the transition to womanhood - she is killed by a falling tree. It is clear from the text that, to some degree, the father, who always hated their suitors, is responsible for this death (39). What Woolf reveals

is a relation between the repressions of patriarchy as they feed out from the family into society, and the frustration of existential authenticity that denies the possibility of woman being able to fulfil her being, or risking destruction if she pushes her desire to the crisis. The emblematic figure that represents these characters in Woolf's work is 'Judith Shakespeare', as gifted and vital as her brother, but, condemned by the material limitations of patriarchy to have no outlet for her talents she kills herself (*A Room of One's Own* 56).

In questioning the value system upon which society is based Woolf is led to question the ethical foundations of identity. The modernism of Joyce, Conrad, Woolf, and Lawrence was preoccupied with the inadequacy, the falsity, of 'the old stable ego' as it had previously been represented. All these writers sought innovative ways of capturing the truth of an identity perceived to be fragmented and unstable. Of course, once identity is perceived as unstable, then in itself this tends to undermine the ideology of patriarchy. In *A Room of One's Own*, according to Morag Shiach's introduction, Woolf sexualises the idea of the fragile self, she rejects the unity of the "I" on the basis that it 'cannot express the complexity, fragmentation, and plurality which she sees as typical of women's experience' (xvi): "I" is only a convenient form for somebody who has no real being' (5). Woolf's novels show, in line with the other modernist writers studied in this thesis, however, that this monological construction of the 'I' is likewise inadequate to capture male experience. Her emphasis is not on gender, but on the fact that this stringent stressing of the 'I' precludes the possibility of connection with the other. It involves a patriarchal commitment to singularity which attempts to negate the potency of the other.

In *Orlando* the narrator comments on the multiplicity of selves that reside in one's being, and the desire to call up the most appropriate self to one's context. This exposes the ideological basis of conventional biography that emphasizes one aspect of being to promote the illusion of an authoritatively totalising narrative. In this sense biography might be said to be the patriarchal genre par excellence. Bernard in *The Waves* also expresses this sense of having no absolute essentiality:

There are many rooms - many Bernards. There was the charming, but weak; the strong, but supercilious; the brilliant, but remorseless; the very good fellow, but, I make no doubt, the awful bore; the sympathetic, but cold; the shabby, but - go into the next room - the foppish, worldly, and too well dressed. What I was to myself was different; was none of these. (200)

He is created by his social and cultural context: 'I am made and remade continually. Different people draw different words from me' (100). Louis on the other hand also feels threatened by this sense of the dispersal of the self but attempts to repress these feelings. He forces himself to be one man otherwise he fears that his energies will 'fill like snow and be wasted' (129). He is trapped by a sense of social responsibility into the limited, constrained, channelled existence of the singular 'I'. The instability of the self is given expression in Woolf's work through the use of the interior monologue which, as with Joyce in *Ulysses*, she situates in a zone of indeterminacy between the character and the narrator so that the phallogocentric unified subject is dislocated by the modality of the narrative voice.

This philosophy of identity embodied by the modernist novel, unfixed, unstable, incoherent, and constantly shifting according to perspective links up with the linguistic prescriptions of Luce Irigaray who argues in *Le speculum de l'autre femme* that the discarding of definition, summation, and precision enables the monologism of patriarchy to be unsettled:

All clear statements are trapped in the same economy of values, in which clarity (oculocentrism) and univocity (the one) reign. Precision must be avoided, if the economy of the One is to be unsettled. (qtd. in Gallup 78)

This exhortation is illustrated throughout *The Waves*, Woolf's most vivid attempt to write the body, and is described by Bernard who acknowledges that fullness of definition is a deception and believes that what can be comprehensively grasped, what appears as conclusiveness can only be falsity. In essence *The Waves* can be read as an attempt by the writer, Bernard, to come to terms with this insubstantial, fragile construction of identity: "But when we sit together, close," said Bernhard, "we melt into each other with phrases" (10). Despite his efforts to tease out the psychology of their individual selves Bernard concludes at the end of the book:

it is not one life that I look back upon; I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am - Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda or Louis or how to distinguish my life from theirs. (212)

Indeed if patriarchal identity is premised on distinguishing the self from the other then Bernard's final perception of unavoidable connection seems a validation of an anti-patriarchal conception of identity: 'This difference we make so much of, this identity we so feverishly cherish, was overcome' (222). In political terms we can see how this assault on the monological construction of identity underpins Woolf's hostility towards the doctors Bradshaw and Holmes in *Mrs Dalloway* who believe in an incontestable monological truth to which everything must conform and of which they are the sole guardians. Aesthetically, this commitment to monology is the basis of her rejection of Edwardian realism.

Woolf's work is then clearly fired by an opposition to the injunctions of patriarchy in all its guises. Having looked at the way in which Woolf responded to patriarchy at the level of character and having stressed that this response to patriarchy can be read in a non-gendered way, I would now like to look at how this political hostility was translated into the form and structure of her work. I will argue that this dimension of Woolf's response to patriarchy is premised on gender. Woolf's aesthetic response to patriarchy led her towards the undermining and reconstruction of traditional literary forms, as if seeking the structure that could contain the female experience:

To try the accepted forms, to discard the unfit, to create others which are more fitting, is a task that must be accomplished before there is freedom or achievement. ('Men and Women' 1992, 20)

In a review of Dorothy Richardson's *The Tunnel* published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1919 Woolf recognises a discrepancy between the experience that Richardson attempts to articulate in her novel and 'the form provided by tradition for her to say it in' (1992, 17). By the time she writes on Richardson again in 'Romance and the Heart' (a 1923 review of *Revolving Lights*) Woolf finds that Richardson has solved this problem, she has developed 'the psychological sentence of the feminine gender' (1992, 51). This need for women to find a form and language through which they can speak is a constant theme in Woolf's work. In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf talks of the need for woman to formulate her own sentence and reconstruct genre. She regards the

attraction that women feel towards the novel as due to its being the youngest literary form and therefore the most pliable, the most manipulable for women's needs:

The book has somehow to be adapted to the body, and at a venture one would say that women's books should be shorter, more concentrated, than those of men, and framed so that they do not need long hours of steady and uninterrupted work. (101)

In the last essay of *Ce sex qui n'en est pas un* Luce Irigaray referring to the language of obligation and familialism cautions that 'if we continue to speak the same language to each other, we are going to reproduce the same history' (qtd. in Gallup 113). This search for a new language to orchestrate a new history is integral to the modernist enterprise. Joyce explicitly wishes to evade the nightmare of history (*Ulysses* 28) and in *Finnegans Wake* invents a language that detemporalises existence. Woolf's purpose similarly is to experiment with new ways of seeing through language in order to achieve a liberation from the imposed patterns established by history.

In *Arguing with the Past* Gillian Beer describes *To the Lighthouse* as a 'post-symbolist novel' because it not only utilises but also calls into question the way in which language employs symbol to give substance to the intangible. What happens in the novel is that symbol is pared away so that the lighthouse eventually becomes just 'a stark tower on a bare rock'. As Beer puts it:

Lacan argues that symbol and the act of symbolisation represent the father. In freeing character and text from the appetite for symbol Virginia Woolf may be seen as moving language and persons beyond subjection to patriarchy. And in so doing she transformed and dissolved her own father through the act of writing. (201)

In fact in a letter to Roger Fry, Woolf claimed: 'I meant nothing by the lighthouse. One has to have a central line down the middle of the book to hold the design together'.⁵ Quite explicitly then Woolf undermines patriarchal symbolism, she reduces its significance to pattern and demands that that be sufficient to carry the weight of the narrative. Symbolisation means removing something from its context and allowing it to carry meanings that are not necessarily contingent on what is around it. Woolf's work is about the impinging of context and in particular the context of the family. I do not believe that

5. Virginia Woolf, letter to Roger Fry, May 27 1927. *Letters III*: 385.

Woolf's conception of the importance of relationships to human existence would enable her to place much faith in the explanatory power of symbolism. In the early pages of *To the Lighthouse* James Ramsay is seen cutting out pictures from magazines, isolating objects from their context and allowing them to become redefined as isolated, free standing, complete in themselves, 'symbols'. There is no doubt that Woolf sees this activity, James wielding the scissors, as a male act connected with violence.

To reject absolutely the symbolic, however, would be to threaten the very possibility of communication itself. Throughout Woolf's work there is the pursuit of an(other) language, capable of a different kind of communication, anterior to the paternal/symbolic. Towards the end of *The Years* two mysterious children are brought into the Pargiters' drawing room by Delia. They are fed with cake and co-erced into singing whereupon they burst into:

Etho passo tanno hai,
Fai donk to tu do,
Mai to, kai to, lai to see
Toh dom to tuh do -. (408)

There are all kinds of possible readings of this extraordinary performance based around class and generation miscommunication. However in this singing it might also be possible to detect an intimation of the future as belonging to a language that closely resembles Kristeva's semiotic in its reduction of the importance of representation and its promotion of the values of rhythm, tone, and movement.⁶ This pursuit might be termed an archaeology, a quest for the words that will undermine patriarchy. The fact that this is an 'archaeology' is significant since it signifies that male language is the 'other', non-primary differentiation from the language of women. The distinction between the two languages is the discourse barrier that prevents Rachel from communicating with Dalloway in *The Voyage Out*. Whereas she wishes to personify politics, that is to embody it, Dalloway sees it as symbol, a vast inhuman machine (57).

6. I will explore Julia Kristeva's ideas in more detail in the next chapter. It might be worth noting here, however, Richard Ellmann's statement that in working on translations of *Finnegans Wake*:

Joyce's great emphasis was upon the flow of the line, and he sometimes astonished them [his collaborators] (as later, when he was helping Nino Frank with the Italian translation, he astonished him) by caring more for sound and rhythm than sense (632-3).

In a culture that is avowedly patriarchal, language as the medium of communication and exchange within that culture must conform to its orientation and serve its needs. Woolf's vigilance towards language arises out of the suspicion that language speaks through the individual rather than vice versa. This is made plain in *Orlando* where language is used to show that the protagonist, far from being the transcendent individual that is sometimes argued, is in fact subject to social and historical conditioning. In the Victorian age she is prevented from expressing herself in language (by the symbolic systems of the period) and finds rather that words take possession of meaning to articulate a truth in conformity with social ideology. It is only after she operates from a position consonant with the expectations of the age, that is after her marriage, that she is able to write. That there is an authorised, appropriate language underpinned by socio-cultural determinants means that Rachel's 'tendency to use the wrong words' (13) in *The Voyage Out* causes Helen Ambrose much vexation as an index of Rachel's position outside the accepted social/symbolic placements. The reader, however, might wonder about the subversive power of using 'the wrong words'.

It is in *The Waves* that Woolf approaches most closely the presentation of a language that does not divide, categorise, separate or individualise, but instead moves towards the integration of six voices into some larger, inclusive whole. This is a rejection of the patriarchal position that there is a one-one correspondence between language and truth; the view of language that, for instance, characterises William Rodney's verse in *Night and Day*, which is organised around a theory in which 'every mood has its metre' and which as a mode of composition Katharine regards as an 'exclusively masculine' skill (143). This is a manifestation of the inflexible rigidity of the male intelligence which is elsewhere characterised in Woolf's work as akin to 'iron girders...upholding the world' (*To the Lighthouse* 98). In distinction to the rigidity of the male model, Woolf presents another 'little language' (*The Waves* 183) which escapes the limitations of convention and that allows a glimpsing of the truth through a fresh articulation which avoids the 'neat designs of life' (183) and instead invokes 'broken words, inarticulate words' (183).

The insight that language and form may constrain and structure the production of truth generates a refusal to accept inherited traditions which is a modernist characteristic of writers as different as Joyce and Lawrence. For Woolf the emphasis is placed on confronting a powerful inheritance tinged with the distortions of patriarchy, that in the analysis of *Three Guineas* constitutes a form of imposed authority connected to fascism. In *Night and Day* Mrs. Hilbery seems subject to the dominion of paternal ancestry since she intends to write a biography of her poet father. In fact, she never writes the book because her interest is really in her mother. In suggesting as she does that Shakespeare's sonnets were written by Anne Hathaway she is raising the status of her mother at the expense of the poetic authority of her father. Furthermore her very mode of composition, fragmentary moments of inspiration jotted down in the midst of domestic activity seems designed to fail in its attempt to capture the male artist. As a model of biographical composition it strikes at the heart of the patriarchal ideals of editorial concision and objectivity and aligns itself with the biographical infelicities of *Jacob's Room* (and we shall see).

The fact that there is a sub-narrative of power behind Woolf's critique of genre is most obvious in her deconstruction of the lecture in *A Room of One's Own*. The lecture is the epitome of the patriarchal monological model of power enshrined in a literary form that denies openness, communication and interaction. Woolf undermines the authoritative placing of lecturer, she disclaims the power of her position and attempts to redirect the circuit of exchange to make the lecture a forum for dialogue. In fact she states quite unequivocally that what she offers is not a revelation of truth: 'one cannot hope to face the truth' (4) but a presentation of 'the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker' (5). In *Jacob's Room* Woolf both inhabits and deconstructs the form of the *Bildungsroman*, she mocks the conventions of the hero's progress undercutting not only the genre but also introducing a feminist dimension, a critique of the values behind these conventions: 'Woolf uses Jacob as a device through which to criticise the complacent, effortless authority of prewar, patriarchal formations'

(Flint xx).⁷ The *Bildungsroman* epiphany is constantly adumbrated and repeatedly avoided, frustrating the expected denouement and indicating Woolf's refusal to fit Jacob's conventional life into expected generic patterns.

In *Arguing with the Past* Gillian Beer suggests that Woolf's confrontation with genre and literary tradition in general extends to a critique of plot itself. She argues that Woolf reveals that female subjectivity is only really expressible through resistance to plot, that is 'between the acts'. In this respect Woolf's work can be seen as a politically motivated breaking out of the confines of convention, a refusing of the recognised structures of narrative progression in developing a tangential and oblique plot movement. Her aesthetic theories emphasize the moment and reject the realist necessity of familial connection whose simplistic linearity is satirised in *Orlando*: 'coffee led to a drawing room in which to drink it, and a drawing room to glass cases...' (157). Whilst *The Years* is, at the level of content, a family saga, the narrative of linear progression is dispensed with and the text is punctuated by gaps and hiatuses in which events of apparent significance go unreported thus emphasizing the novel's obsession with the breakdown, interruption, and dislocation of communication.

One can characterise this form of narrative as revealing an existential anti-Darwinian belief in the importance of the crisis of the instant, as opposed to the accretions of the inherited. It has inevitable implications for the familial authority of genealogy and the construction of identity which depends absolutely on the sense that there is some link between one moment and the next. Where such a sense is threatened then identity itself is called into question. This is the case with Rhoda who unable to experience the smooth linearity of the flow of time, suffers a feeling of ontological disjunction that threatens her sense of self:

I cannot make one moment merge in the next. To me they are all violent, all separate...I do not know how to run minute to minute and hour to hour, solving them by some natural force until they make the whole and indivisible mass that you call life. (97)

7. See also Judy Little, 'Jacob's Room as Comedy: Woolf's parodic *Bildungsroman*' in Marcus (ed.), *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*.

As I have already mentioned, the structure of narrative not only impinges on the construction of character in Woolf's work but also has a political resonance of which Woolf is fully conscious. The apparent rejection of historical narrative that characterises the second part of *To the Lighthouse* announces not only Woolf's opposition to the War, but also articulates her belief that the development of humanity is not coterminous with newspaper reports or parliamentary debates.⁸ It represents not a repudiation of history but on the contrary a recognition of the need for its reconstruction along anti-patriarchal lines. This reformulation of the patriarchal concept of 'historical time' reaches its high-point in Woolf's work through *Orlando's* subjectivising time, breaking up the 'realism' of historical, clock time. The narrator describes the 'extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind' (68) and says that it is a theme vastly worthy of investigation. Indeed there are many examples of this discrepancy in the novel:

It would be no exaggeration to say that he would go out after breakfast a man of thirty and come home to dinner a man of fifty-five at least.
(68)

Musing on poetry on a June day, Orlando eventually arises: 'It was now winter and very cold' (71).

I have now identified two aspects of Woolf's work that would appear to suggest contradictory impulses. These are the commitment on the one hand to a philosophy of the moment that signals Woolf's participation in existential, feminist, and modernist rhetoric, and on the other hand an insistence on the construction of continuity, connection, duration, 'time passing' that inhabits a more organic vocabulary. It is possible to identify here a typically modernist dialectic between the radical aesthetic philosophy that stresses the disconnected moment (Joyce's epiphany), and an obsessive concern with the construction of tradition. What this amounts to for Woolf is a way of discovering

8. The form of the newspaper report in *The Voyage Out* (103) is an indication of its moral content, the column is a symbol of patriarchy. Its smooth flow is briefly disturbed by Irish 'brawling' at Westminster but is quickly reasserted:

He had reached the second column of the report, a spasmodic column, for the Irish members had been brawling three weeks ago at Westminster over a question of naval efficiency. After a disturbed paragraph or two, the column of print once more ran smoothly. (103)

how she can reclaim tradition and continuity from their patriarchal annexation, as described by Richard Dalloway in *The Voyage Out*:

“It’s the continuity,” said Richard sententiously. A vision of English history, King following King, Prime Minister Prime Minister, and Law Law had come over him while his wife spoke. (43)

Woolf’s commitment to continuity is deeply inscribed in her texts and is demonstrated by the very imagery that she uses. In *To the Lighthouse* Mrs. McNab battles with her Sisyphean task of keeping the house in order. The condition of the house being a well-established Victorian symbol of security/corruption, the use of this image itself becomes an acknowledgement, not of dislocation, but of continuity with the past. In a sense the house is the material embodiment of the family politics that Woolf examines. It is a key motif through which her connection to the past can be understood. In *The Years* for instance the sale of the Pargiter family home in Abercorn Terrace represents the jettisoning of a past that is irrevocable:

It was an abominable system, he [Martin] thought; family life; Abercorn Terrace. No wonder the house would not let. It had one bathroom, and a basement; and there all those different people had lived, boxed up together, telling lies. (212)

Clearly then the proposition that Woolf’s novels enact a separation from the past or operate a disjunctive aesthetic is problematised even at the very moment it is posited. In *Arguing with the Past* Gillian Beer claims that Woolf’s work ‘fictionalises the modernist claim to a new start, undermines it even as it proposes it’ (3). Woolf is seen, by her, as compulsively rewriting her Victorian heritage both textual and familial. These two realms are connected by Woolf herself in ‘The Leaning Tower’ (1940) where she says:

Books descend from books as families descend from families...They resemble their parents, as human children resemble their parents; yet they differ as children differ, and revolt as children revolt. (1992, 160)

That tradition, a concept that Woolf repeatedly attacks, is absolutely fundamental to her work and is indeed inescapable is further accented when Woolf turns her attention from the literary past to the future achievements of women and gives the lie to the crudely revolutionary dogmas of early modernism that trumpeted a decisive, unbridgeable disengagement from the past. In ‘The Intellectual Status of Women’ (1920), for example, she outlines the view that female genius cannot just spontaneously appear but must be the culmination of an extended tradition of female achievement which can only

arise if the structures are put in place that no longer bar women from the possibility of grasping their opportunities.

The existentially authentic self-sustaining individual is here made subject to the Hegelian jurisdiction of history and it is out of this interaction between the particular and the general, Woolf argues, that progress can be made. Thus in *A Room of One's Own* she claims it was because of the favourable economic climate of the late eighteenth century that there was a spate of female writing that made possible the later, greater achievements of Austen, Eliot, and the Brontës:

For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice. (85)

As we have seen, Gilbert and Gubar argue that Woolf constructs a literary tradition that is affiliative and not modelled on the family. However, in *A Room of One's Own* the impression Woolf gives is not of a tradition that can be freely constructed but of one that must be accepted holistically. Indeed she even employs familial imagery when she talks about the importance of this female literary tradition as allowing women to 'think back through our mothers' (99). It should also be noted, in view of what I have argued in this chapter, that Woolf rejects here the patrilineal heritage as being of no benefit to the woman writer. I think, broadly speaking, that Woolf's commitment in this work to all her female literary forebears as integral to her own literary project and her rejection of all male literary ancestors is a polemical and political position that is the product of her delivery of this text in two lectures to women's colleges. Indeed one could argue that the text deconstructs itself since this very engagement with the concept of tradition can be seen in itself to link her to a male literary tradition.

Most obviously her lectures follow T.S.Eliot's famous essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919) which suggests that 'no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is his appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists' (7). It seems likely that Eliot's concept of tradition is overwhelmingly patriarchal. When he employs the

masculine pronoun I think he means it to be exclusionary. However, if one were to read Woolf's text uncritically then it would seem to promote likewise a gender essentialism that would do damage to her concept of the androgynous artist. I do not wish to minimize the importance that the construction of a female literary tradition had for Woolf. Clearly, in itself, this was a key element in opposing the ideology of patriarchy by reinscribing women into the cultural narrative. However, I think there is a danger in losing sight of how imbued Woolf was with her Victorian intellectual inheritance.

As with so much of her thought one can trace this preoccupation with tradition, for example, not only to her immediate modernist contemporaries but also back to its Victorian roots. John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women* (1869) says very much the same thing as Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), that is, that originality can only develop by building on what has gone before: 'Every fresh stone in the edifice has now to be placed on the top of so many others' (547). This sentiment which Woolf echoes also recalls the philosophy of Alfred Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850): 'That men may rise on stepping stones/ Of their dead selves to higher things' and demonstrates how far from a break with the past, the Victorian inheritance, Woolf's outlook really is.

If Woolf emphasizes a gendered tradition that is because, having been buried, its resurrection or indeed its identification or construction now, at this particular stage of development, needs to be acclaimed so that it can be colonised imaginatively. She conceives in *A Room of One's Own* of 'development' and 'progress' in terms of layers of accretion gradually reaching fruition. Tradition thus becomes in essence the groundwork for advancement towards liberation. The atomistic philosophy behind novelistic character depiction is discarded in favour of a narrative that actually seeks out preterite connections and links.

The interaction between attitudes to tradition and the family are obvious and indeed are fully explored by Woolf in nearly all her novels from the early *Night and Day* (1919) in which Katherine Hilbery is actually compelled to guide strangers through her family traditions:

"Isn't it difficult to live up to your ancestors?" he [Ralph Denham] proceeded.

"I dare say I shouldn't try to write poetry," Katherine replied.

"No. And that's what I should hate. I couldn't bear my grandfather to cut me out." (12)

to her later works, and in particular *The Years* (1937) which explores the evolution of family relations in a quasi-sociological manner.

The complexity of Woolf's attitude towards the past feeds into the complexity of her fictionalised depiction of her parents in *To the Lighthouse*. Jane Lilienfeld argues that the Ramsays embody the Victorian patriarchal ideal of marriage but that Woolf's depiction of their relationship constitutes a sharp attack on the institution and exposes the destruction of human capacities wreaked by Victorian social arrangements. The Ramsays' relationship is marred because Mrs. Ramsay cannot treat her husband as an equal. His demands, vanities, fears, and insecurities, require that she protect him like one of the children:

it was painful to be reminded of the inadequacy of human relationships, that the most perfect was flawed, and could not bear the examination which loving her husband, with her instinct for truth, she turned upon it. (41)

It is inconceivable that Woolf's presentation of her mother and father which is here imbued with a sense of regret (as much as hostility) would conjure a simplistic picture given the sophistication of her investigation of tradition. To put this in relief one could compare this aspect of Woolf's work with Richard Aldington's novel of 1929 *The Death of a Hero*, in which the writer's antagonism towards his immediate history feeds an excoriating attack on the hero's parents. The point of this comparison is certainly not to present Woolf's attitude to the past as passive. Her response to tradition is active, and is expressed, for example, in her assaults on the conventions of literary form which are extensive and which are primed with a politically-inspired oppositionism.

In 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' for instance, Woolf describes the inadequacy of the methods of Edwardian fiction for her purposes:

they have made tools and established conventions which do their business. But these tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools are death. (1992, 80)

This it seems to me places the polemical assertions of *A Room of One's Own* in their proper context for here Woolf is not talking about a gendered literary

tradition. She is talking about new ways of expressing new ways of looking at the world. Of course one of the most important facets of this new world within which modernists lived was the increasingly important and visible position of women. There is no question then that new conventions, forms and languages had to be invented in order to adequately deal with this situation which opened up in the wake of the retreat of patriarchy. Pre-eminently what I think this means for Woolf is that she is no longer in thrall to those literary forebears who wrote women out of the plot of the novel but can use them, if she so chooses, for her own ends.

There is a danger here in oversimplifying the argument or presenting it too categorically. What I wish to argue is that Woolf's attitude to tradition involved an understanding that tradition itself was an ideological construct. Consequently the establishment of a female literary tradition was vital to the female artist. At the same time and as part of that effort, because she now has her own literary lineage, the female artist can draw on her male forebears without running the risk that in so doing she is complying with the patriarchal suppression of this other tradition.

The arguments are further complicated by the fact that Woolf herself is not only inconsistent but at times in her polemical works seems to present an aesthetic theory that outrages the deepest insights of her fictional work. Thus although I stand by my reading of 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' because the argument is presented in the opening sentences along non-gender lines as a confrontation between Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy on one side and Forster, Lawrence, Strachey, Joyce, and Eliot on the other, I would like to illustrate some of the difficulties that I have mentioned in adopting this non-gendered reading.

Woolf rejects the materialism of the Edwardian writers, Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy in 'Modern Fiction' (1919) as a waste of energy on the 'trivial' and the 'transitory'. However, in *A Room of One's Own* she emphasizes the importance of material conditions for the production of art: 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction' (4). Indeed, she goes so far in the materialist direction as to consider a private income 'infinitely' more

important than the female vote. In *Three Guineas* she describes the tyranny of material constraints and illustrates her point with reference to Mrs Oliphant who:

sold her brain, her very admirable brain, prostituted her culture and enslaved her intellectual liberty in order that she might earn her living and educate her children. (172)

Woolf's apparent attempt in 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' to seal off the artistic aesthetic of the novel from the contamination of the material means of its production is rendered more unconvincing by her assertion, again in *Three Guineas*, that the actual form of literary production is governed by material conditions. Thus the observation presented by Woolf that most women writers in the nineteenth century wrote novels is put down to the fact that they wrote in a common room, were subject to frequent interruptions, and novels demand a lesser degree of concentration than poems or plays.

In the essay 'On Not Knowing Greek' (1925) Woolf emphasizes the influence that the physical conditions of life had on the nature and style of Greek art. Indeed Woolf's fiction repeatedly demonstrates, for example in *Jacob's Room*, an acute consciousness of the material impinging of socio-historical conditions on character. Jacob is illuminated by his surroundings, his context. His status as an individual is secondary to his purpose as an agent to demonstrate the significance and meaning of his upbringing; he is, after all, 'the inheritor' (57). This awareness of the impinging of the material suggests that there is something behind Woolf's attack on the aesthetic of Edwardian realism in 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown' other than a rejection of its obsessively detailed contextualisation⁹ that leads her to outrage the deepest perceptions of her novels in essaying an unconvincing belief in an ahistorical transcendent human nature, 'Mrs. Brown is eternal'. After all in *A Room of One's Own* Woolf announces a very different kind of aesthetic in saying that art works are not produced 'by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the houses we live in' (53).

9. Woolf's antithesis to the completed architectural structure imaged by Edwardian realism is the breathless 'and...and...' (91) description of London in *Jacob's Room* that represents her belief in the uncircumscribable, indomitable, uncontainable, confrontation with reality.

In talking about the importance of character to the novelist in 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' Woolf casually brushes off everything else: 'when all the practical business of life has been discharged....' ⁽⁷¹⁾ This cavalier attitude mitigates the impact of much of what she has to say. It suggests an attitude towards the pre-eminence of abstracted character that would indeed mark Woolf's distinction from Bennett, but the essay itself, as indeed the fiction, retreats from this position and instead creates a context as equally detailed as Bennett's, in which character can breathe. Woolf's motive is something other than Oedipal generational rivalry, or artistic disagreement, more likely the intensity of her assault is generated by a feminist aversion to Bennett's well-known paternalistic condescension. Indeed Woolf's essay fractures along sexual lines, Bennett's place in the text can be seen as filled by Mr. Smith who immediately comes to represent a patriarchal threat. He is intrinsically less interesting to Woolf, less kind, less deep, less human even. In fact as a critique of artistic practice the narrative soon becomes side-tracked into an attack on patriarchy involving a failure of imagination since Woolf sticks to the stereotype and fails to create a character for Mr. Smith. He is nothing more than the brutal intruder, the exploiter, the destroyer wielding his masculine power to oppress the innocent Mrs. Brown: 'He banged, he slammed. His dripping umbrella made a pool in the hall' (74). Woolf replicates here the Cyclopean perspective of her patriarchal forebears.

This movement from an Oedipal to a gender rivalry is fully articulated in *A Room of One's Own* where Woolf rejects conventional form on the basis of sexual inappropriateness, she articulates a demand that women break the rules of grammar and syntax in order to express their own thoughts in their own language. In other words she links aesthetic innovation to feminist consciousness. However, whilst accepting that this is the conclusion of Woolf's investigation into women and fiction I think we should also acknowledge that the logic of Woolf's argument is that the male 'Georgian' writer likewise will need to find a new language and new tools to express the fact that 'in or about December 1910 human character changed' ('Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' 70).

The depiction of family relationships is integral to the dramatisation of this tension between continuity and disjunction and the gender inscription of this antagonism. In *Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life* Lyndall Gordon argues that Woolf's attitude towards continuity and tradition is different to that of other modernists. Whereas in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* the artist is defined by a romantic egoism that allows him to emerge through enforced separation from the family, Lily Briscoe 'makes the artist an heir, evolving naturally, almost biologically, from the previous generation' (200). Gordon's language here elides the drama of the transition but it does emphasize the extent to which Woolf's work expresses an ambivalence towards the family in this respect that is not shared by Joyce or by Lawrence in his post-war work. Gordon's statement also ignores the ambivalence that underlies all modernist writing about the family. Both Joyce and Lawrence actually inhabit Romantic egoism in a very uneasy way - neither achieves complete detachment from the family; rebellion is after all a form of connection.

We have seen in this chapter how Woolf goes in search of her literary matrilineage, how she engages also with her male literary forebears and how in works such as *To the Lighthouse* and *The Years* she conducts a closely observed analysis of her immediate Victorian ancestry. There is no question therefore that her work interrogates the significance of the past. Although at the micro level her aesthetic might be committed to the disconnected 'collage of impressions', her texts tend to rely finally upon an embedded notion of connectedness that makes the progression of sequentiality possible in a way that it is not, for example, in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. There is a constant oscillation in Woolf's work between continuity and disjunction that goes to the heart of the modernist *revolution* and that also informs her critique of patriarchy. Gillian Beer has pointed out in *Arguing with the Past* that it was the peculiar experience of Woolf's generation to have to deal with the disruption, caused by

the First World War (185),¹⁰ to the familial continuity that is documented throughout the literature of the nineteenth century.

Woolf's novels explore this division which in a sense becomes the subject of her work. It finds expression, for example, in the divided histories of Clarissa and Rezia in *Mrs Dalloway* and in the split structure of *To the Lighthouse* in which the pre-war world is overseen by the mother and the post-war world is dominated by the father. It may be that Woolf's increasing familiarity with the work of Freud led her to see this divided structure as somehow expressive of women's experience. The fact that Woolf holds together these bifurcations in a single text marks her off from Lawrence who fails to combine the two perspectives of the pre- and post-war worlds in *The Sisters* and thus is forced to turn this work into two separate novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. The genealogy of *The Rainbow* is closed down to explore the intra-generational relationships of *Women in Love*.

The consequence of Woolf's ability to contain a vanished past within her work, notwithstanding the bravado of modernist iconoclasm, is an elegiac tone that far from repudiating the past suggests inextricable connection. One of the impulses behind this elegiac consciousness is the Proustian desire to recapture the past, to transform memory into art as a way of rediscovering the lost mother or the lost family. Woolf's late childhood was punctuated by a series of deaths in the family: 1895 Julia, 1897 Stella, 1904 Leslie Stephen, 1906 Thoby and Woolf's life and novels can be read as being full of mother substitutes: Margaret Llewelyn-Davies, Caroline Stephen, Violet Dickinson, Clara Pater, Janet Case. This does not mean that Woolf looks back on the past or the relationship to the mother with any less critical a gaze. The depiction of Mrs. Ramsay's relationship with Lily Briscoe is evidence that this form of association was fraught with ambivalence and tension. Lily, 'keeping house for her father off the

10. Woolf, 'The Leaning Tower' (1940): 'Then suddenly, like a chasm in a smooth road, the war came'. Katharine Mansfield attacked some of Woolf's early work specifically with not coming to terms with this division. She argued that *Night and Day* was mired in traditionalism. This is, however, not an observation that can be supported if placed in the context of Woolf's work as a whole.

Brompton Road' (21) must refuse the role that Mrs. Ramsay attempts to force her into. She must resist her own desire to throw herself into Mrs. Ramsay's charge. She defines herself in opposition to the mother. Similarly, Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* suffers from an ontological insecurity, an unstable sense of identity generated by living under the shadow of her mother. Ripley Ambrose voices his disapproving observation at the start of the novel that she is 'not like her mother' (8). In a sense, however problematic, the identification with or of the mother is a way of reaching back into a female past that has been occluded by the demands of patriarchy.

Lily Briscoe then, like Woolf, must not seal herself off hermetically from the past, she must not attempt to disown genealogy as Ursula does in *Women in Love*. Instead she must reclaim the past through art and attempt to uncover a connection that is maternally validated. This elegiac archaeology is idealised in *Mrs Dalloway* through Clarissa's retrospective perception of Bourton as a kind of pre-lapsarian world sanctified by the mother. After her mother's death Clarissa's parties become the means whereby she is able to recreate this lost paradise in tribute. In this way her party at the end of the novel can be seen not as a capitulation to the demands of patriarchy but as a celebration of the compact between maternity and life. It is Clarissa's response to an existential crisis and ultimately it is a social vision that affirms community and communality:

Her gatherings serve as a perpetual tribute to the absent mother, creative acts of social artistry based on the primary model of family affiliation. Clarissa's parties are works of art that challenge mortality and strive to reinstate the prelapsarian delights of infant joy. (Henke, '*Mrs Dalloway: the Communion of Saints*' 127)

The depiction of the party in *Mrs Dalloway* is an illustration of how Woolf's work in the 1920's can be characterised by a pursuit of narrative retrogression towards a maternal point of origin. Some critics have argued that this attempt is unsuccessful. Elizabeth Abel, for instance, claims that Clarissa's Bourton exists as a reapprehension of the past, not in a developmental narrative, but as a detemporalised moment of feminine pastoral which offsets the decline in intimacy of the contemporary, male-dominated world:

Clarissa's recollected history proceeds from a female-centred natural world to the heterosexual and androcentric social world. Woolf structures this progression as a binary opposition between past and

present, nature and culture, feminine and masculine dispensations.

(31)

I have already argued against this point in so far as Clarissa's parties are, I think, meant by Woolf to be seen as a connection to this pre-patriarchal Bourton lineage. As the culminating event of the novel, if indeed there can be said to be such a thing, it would be wrong to downplay the significance that the party has in linking the two parts of Clarissa's life. In this sense it is unfair to say that there is no communication between these two periods and that Clarissa is cut-off or disconnected from her female history.

However, that is not to say that Woolf maintains this perspective throughout her writing life. There is in her work of the 1930's a radical departure from that of the previous decade, a departure that perhaps owes something to the influence of Freud and to the appropriation of the ideology of motherhood by fascism. Woolf now sees the chaste daughter and not the mother as the anti-patriarchal focus. In this shift the search for a maternal lineage or point of origin becomes far less important.

Whereas *A Room of One's Own* celebrates matrilineage, *Three Guineas* places the narrator as 'daughter of an educated man'¹¹ and reflects Woolf's growing concern with exploring the daughter's relationship to her father. This concern is detailed, for example, in *Between the Acts* (1940) where society is imaged as paternal and attention is focused on the father-daughter relation. It is worth noting that whereas for Woolf the paternal aspect of society is the embodiment of fascism, for the Freud of *Moses and Monotheism* (1935), a work incidentally that Woolf read in 1939 in preparation for its publication by the Hogarth Press,¹² fascism arises out of the decline of this paternal aspect and the rise of the maternal, the re-emphasis on the body as opposed to the intellect.

11. This identity ascription also reflects Woolf's assessment that patriarchy withdraws her from conventional class placement. She is of a different class to her brothers, she is even less influential than women of the working class who can at least protest by withdrawing their labour: 'Our class is the weakest of all the classes in the state. We have no weapon with which to enforce our will' (*Three Guineas* 168).

12. See Woolf's letter to John Lehmann, July 15 1939. *Letters VI*: 346.

I have argued that the emphasis in Woolf's work shifts during the late 1920's and 1930's from an attempt to uncover the pre-history of women in patriarchal culture which involves a preoccupation with the figure of the mother, to a concern with contemporary strategies for resisting the ideology of patriarchal culture which involves a preoccupation with the figure of the chaste daughter. In a sense both these concerns, with the mother and then the daughter are different ways of exploring the best path to follow for progressing towards the truth of female experience or indeed its discovery or recovery. One of the questions raised by *To the Lighthouse* is who will remember Mrs Ramsay? Out on the bay her son James tries to place his memories in some sort of order. He tries to find a place for his mother 'but all the time he thought of her, he was conscious of his father following his thought, shadowing it, making it shiver and falter' (173). By the end of the voyage, out of the repression of the mother, the successful transmission of authority from father to son has taken place.

Ultimately it is outside the family through the artist Lily Briscoe that the mother is remembered. Lily works to actively recover Mrs. Ramsay which she eventually does in the form of a line in the middle of her canvas; just as Mrs. Ramsay herself is always present at the centre of Lily's consciousness. Her reconstitution is possible in the open structure of the painting but is not available to the linear grammar of Mr. Ramsay's logic which cannot contain absence. Lily's painting is a jettisoning of the old model of ratiocination, the linear argument of western consciousness, in favour of something less 'positivistic', less immediately apprehensible. In fact *To the Lighthouse* itself carries out this deconstruction of the patriarchal logic of linearity. Metaphysically it holds out the promise of a journey to a clarifying conclusion, a *lighthouse*. This closure in truth, this shedding of light, is, however, never achieved.

In conclusion then there can be no question that Woolf's work represents an attack on the patriarchal family system and that this is a deliberate part of her literary project. In a review of Hugh Walpole's *The Green Mirror* published in 1918 Woolf writes:

If the family theme has taken the place of the love theme with our more thoughtful writers, that goes to prove for this generation it is the more fertile of the two...another English family has been smashed to

splinters and freedom is stealing over the roof tops. (qtd. in Marcus, *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy*, 9)

Clearly then, relatively early in her writing career, Woolf recognises that the novel can have a social impact and a revolutionary one at that. I have tried to show how in both her depiction of character and in her use of language and narrative structure Woolf has registered her opposition to the family system. An opposition made more pressing by the fact that in works such as *Three Guineas* Woolf sees the family as the incubator of dangerous philosophies such as fascism.

Clearly this opposition has a gender dimension, or at least if Woolf feels that the family has also directed male subjectivity into negative paths, her assaults are energised by her perception of its repression of female experience. The strength of this feeling is glimpsed in Woolf's first novel *The Voyage Out*. The hotel guests are sitting around after breakfast engaging in a number of simultaneous conversations one of which involves a newspaper report of a trapped cat:

Hewet picked up one sheet and read, "A lady was walking yesterday in the streets of Westminster when she perceived a cat in the window of a deserted house. The famished animal -

"I shall be out of it anyway," Mr Thornbury interrupted peevishly.

"Cats are often forgotten," Miss Allan remarked.

"Remember, William, the Prime Minister has reserved his answer," said Mrs Thornbury...

"...The famished animal, which had been noticed by workmen for some days, was rescued, but - by Jove! it bit the man's hand to pieces!"

"Wild with hunger, I suppose," commented Miss Allan. (103-4)

This scene cross-cuts the rescue of a deserted cat and its biting the hand of its rescuer with the political troubles caused by Irish MPs at Westminster. I think that this juxtaposition between the domestic and the political is one that Woolf intends to emphasize. The cat is described, rather strangely, as having been 'perceived' by the lady, despite the fact it is in a window. This story can be read as expressing Woolf's view of the history of women under patriarchy, trapped inside a deserted home. It is not as if the situation of the cat is unknown, workmen have been aware of its predicament for some time but have not acted. It has taken a lady walking by to bring about this liberation. She has perceived the history of this cat and achieved a successful resolution of its circumstances. Having been released, however, the cat is not grateful but has bitten a man's

hand to pieces. It is hardly surprising that imprisoned, starved, and restricted the cat should not be grateful when 'saved' by its oppressor.

If I would present the foregoing as a key image at the start of Woolf's writing career I would like briefly to draw attention to another image in one of Woolf's last novels, *The Years*. This is the scene in the first part of the book, set in 1880, of the Pargiter children waiting desultorily in the family home both for their father to return and for the kettle to boil. The whole episode of the boiling kettle goes on for several pages and culminates in the excitement of ' "It's boiling!" Milly exclaimed. "Its boiling!" ' (11). This is surely the only time in the history of English literature that a kettle's boiling has been accorded two exclamation marks in a single paragraph. What is expressed in this scene is the absolute passivity of the Pargiter children. They are subject wholly to the demands and the mores of the family and the intense boredom of literally being restricted from doing anything. All their energies and creativity are focused on the production of the paternal cup of tea.

What I have tried to show in this chapter is Woolf's opposition to the patriarchal family system. The significance of the two images I have just discussed is, I believe, that the way in which Woolf approaches this attack on patriarchy is through emphasizing her activeness, her ability to create and construct. On the most fundamental level this starts with her writing itself. Her creation of literary texts is a challenge to a traditionally male narrative which requires that she not only confront the spectre of her father's authority but also the weight of the Victorian patrilineage which sustains him. In a diary entry for November 1928 Woolf states that if her father had still been alive then she would have been unable to write, and that in writing she is able to reconstruct her relationship to her father on a more equitable level. More than this though, what I have tried to show in this chapter is the way in which Woolf engages actively with concepts that ideology presents as static: tradition, lineage, literary structure, and language. It is her active interrogation of these concepts as much as the conclusions that she draws which constitutes the fulfilment of her anti-patriarchal stance. Her refusal to accept the truth as given.

Having said this, I believe that it is in the work of James Joyce that an anti-patriarchal familial economy can be fully envisaged. Whilst Woolf is continually looking over her shoulder at a past mired in the inequity of the Victorian patrilineage, Joyce is engaged with testing out the new forms of narrative capable of encapsulating the fragmentation of authority. He is acutely conscious of the collapse of the patriarchal certainties that Woolf's work charts, and in his dismemberment of the traditional family narrative he succeeds in effecting a liberation from paternal oppression; in so far as *Finnegans Wake* articulates for the first time a language that doesn't operate under the sign of the father (who is sleeping, or dead).

V

Parent Thesis: Joyce and the Politics of the Family

The author studies of the previous chapters have demonstrated the difficulty that modernist writers experienced in attempting to disengage themselves from the idea of the family even where that seems to have been an explicit objective of their work. Following Edward Said's conception of narrative which I explored in the introduction, I have speculated that this difficulty may derive from something other than a writer's social, cultural or psychological relationship to the family; it may derive from the fact that narrative itself has a 'familial' structure. In this chapter I would like to explore that idea in more detail by looking at the consequences of Joyce's assault on conventional narrative structure for our understanding of the family.

In *Desire in Language* Julia Kristeva identifies a poetic 'trans-mental' language that favours the autonomy of the signifier over the fixed meaning of a final signified. Kristeva argues that all literary work, prior to the late nineteenth century, rested on the premise of the integrity of the sign, a premise that closed the text at the very moment of its origination. Jacques Derrida makes this same point in arguing in 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' that the notion of the integrity of the sign is premised in western thought on a conception of structure that was neutralised by reference to a fixed point of origin, a final signified, or a centre that limited its play.

I would argue that throughout the nineteenth century this monologically central point of immanence was the father. John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* published in 1873 gives expression to this idea. Like so many nineteenth century works it deals with the son's struggle to throw off the burden of the father who is quite clearly the fixed point of origin and shaper of the filial narrative: 'I was born in

London, on the 20th May 1806, and was the eldest son of James Mill, the author of the *History of British India*' (26). So, Mill sees himself as the son of his father, the work of an author of histories. I will argue later in this chapter and in the conclusion that modernist narrative can be thought of as refusing the progenitive structures that are characteristic of nineteenth century novels, and that the *Autobiography* makes clear are linked to the authority of the father. This of course makes the position of author itself somewhat problematical and is one of the reasons why modernist works tend to draw the reader into complicity for their construction. Mill's response to this problem was also to disclaim full responsibility for his text. In the tribute he pays to Harriet Taylor and her daughter Helen Taylor he gives expression to the uncomfortable feelings that may be associated with the patriarchal position of author:

whoever, either now or hereafter, may think of me and of the work I have done, must never forget that it is the product not of one intellect and conscience but of three, the least considerable of whom, and above all the least original, is the one whose name is attached to it.
(196)

The representation of mothers in the works of Joyce, Woolf, and Lawrence challenges not only the patriarchal assumptions of nineteenth century literature but also, in itself, demands a form of narrative structure which breaks down the authority of the monological. It is I think fair to say, as Gilbert and Gubar do, that some modernist works demonstrate a hostility towards and fear of the feminine:

to many late nineteenth - and early twentieth - century men, women seemed to be the agents of an alien world that evoked anger and anguish, while to women in these years men appeared as aggrieved defenders of an indefensible order. Thus both male and female writers increasingly represented women's unprecedented invasion of the public sphere as a battle of the sexes, a battle over a zone that could only be defined as a no man's land. (1: 4)

However, I would argue, unlike Gilbert and Gubar, that this hostility is not primarily directed towards women, but is in fact an expression of opposition towards the attempt to replace one monological principle with another; the authority of the father with the love of the mother. Joyce perceives mother love as a dangerous form of temptation that the artist must negotiate his way around. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Stephen Dedalus's friend Cranly tries to completely usurp the place of the father by presenting mother

love as a kind of transcendental signifier, the fixed guarantor of all meaning and stability: 'whatever else is unsure in this stinking dunghill of a world a mother's love is not' (208). Stephen's belief, however, in the distanced, ascetic, heroic artist will deny the possibility of any transcendental sign 'whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church' (213). It is precisely the limited, fixed identity prescribed by these positions that Stephen seeks to avoid through the strategies of 'silence, exile, and cunning' (213) and that Joyce exposes through a radical assault on the monological word.

Stephen's opposition to the transcendental sign of mother love is so pronounced that by the time of *Ulysses* he has evolved into a mother killer, at least as far as Buck Mulligan is concerned. However, for Joyce the dead return and Stephen must struggle with the ghost of his mother until the climactic scene in 'Circe' where he appears to achieve some kind of liberation. That this scene carries the weight that I attach to it, that it involves some kind of liberation from the transcendental signifier of mother love is, I think, very clear. Stephen's feelings move from guilt: '(choking with fright, remorse and horror) They say I killed you, mother. He offended your memory. Cancer did it, not I. Destiny' (474) to a refusal to submit to her religious exhortations, and an assertion of the freedom of the artist: 'No! No! No! Break my spirit, all of you, if you can! I'll bring you all to heel!' (475). That Joyce means this confrontation to have more than local significance is revealed by the fact that Stephen is faced not with Mrs Mary Dedalus but with 'the Mother'. That it does have more than local significance is revealed through the apocalyptic imagery that follows Stephen's banishment of the mother's ghost: '(Time's livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry)' (475).

As in *Sons and Lovers* the modernist novel seems to look for this liberation through an act of violence, certainly through the removal of the mother. There is no suggestion that the son can live in freedom in proximity to his mother. Perhaps it is desire for the mother that is felt to be so dangerous. Sheldon Brivic argues that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* has a disjunctive structure in which each chapter reproduces a pattern in which the seeking of

the mother is threatened by the father leading to a loss of direction (wandering) and then conclusively to a triumph which is promptly deconstructed in the next chapter precipitating a repeat of the process. The narrative then is energised by the conflict between desire for the mother (which must be resisted) and fear of the father (which must be confronted).

In textual terms, Joyce's liberation from the transcendental signified, the logocentric commitment to a structuring principle, requires his exorcism of the mother (as well as the father), yet even in *Finnegans Wake* the spectral desire for maternal anchorage pervades the text: 'Mother of moth! I will to show herword in flesh. Approach not for ghost sake! It is dormition!' (561.27). For Derrida this transcendental centre, despite its being formulated differently at different times always relies on the assumption of 'presence'. The rupturing of notions about the structurality of structure is consequent upon the withdrawal of the idea of a central presence:

This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a centre or origin, everything became discourse - provided we can agree on this word - that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely. (1978, 280)

The consequence of this as Derrida observed and as *Finnegans Wake* bears testimony is that the signifier takes the place of the centre and facilitates the movement of play in the overabundance of its signification, its supplementarity. Furthermore, the infinite deferral of meaning that is a consequence of lack of presence means that writing can be appropriated in all kinds of ways as is demonstrated by Barthes' reading of 'Sarrasine' in *S/Z* or Edward Said's of *Mansfield Park* in *Culture and Imperialism*. The fate of the *Titbits* story in *Ulysses* might stand as axiomatic of this point (57).

This offering up of writing to a multiplicity of interpretations, of fates even, unsettles the narrative economy of the realism of the nineteenth century novel which tended to promote a notion of truth that was monological in so far as it appeared to encourage a single authoritative meaning. The monological position in its repressive potential for violence is what Joyce satirises in the

figure of the citizen in the 'Cyclops' episode of *Ulysses*. Even more radically, monologism is disrupted by the very structure of this section of the text, its conversation of inflated discourses: legal, epic, scientific, journalistic, and romance quest. That the protagonist of this episode should be called 'the citizen' implies that he should stand as the embodiment of public man. It is interesting therefore that his political orientation is towards the privative world of the family and that he understands society through that prism: 'We want no more strangers in our house' (265). Of course these are words spoken from a public house, a place of welcome to strangers.

The citizen parallels the violation by the Cyclops' in *The Odyssey* of the code of hospitality ordained by Zeus. The nation of Cyclops' is the antithesis of a civic culture:

They have no assemblies to debate in, they have no ancestral ordinances; they live in arching caves on the tops of high hills, and the head of each family heeds no other, but makes his own ordinances for wife and children. (*The Odyssey* 101)

Therefore to name the Cyclops 'citizen' is directly to affront our understanding of the meaning of the sign. It undermines precisely the monologism that the citizen is supposed to incarnate. At the same time, the presentation of the citizen, somewhat ironically, emphasizes the fragmentation of city-life into isolated 'familial' groupings that break down the free-flow of sympathy and establish loyalties above the strictly communal. In Greek terms the Cyclops' over-value family at the expense of community. Thus in this episode Joyce demonstrates the inadequacy of a view that would present all the woes of the nation, of the polity as due to familial dysfunction and would thereby elevate the family structure to the position where it alone is capable of stabilising society: 'A dishonoured wife, says the citizen, that's what's the cause of all our misfortunes' (266). However, it would be too simple to regard Joyce as distanced from this statement and presenting it ironically so that it can be regarded as an example of the parochialism of Irish politics that brought down Parnell. The fact is that the statement is tied to no specific reference and indeed in its generality is also of relevance to Bloom. It would be more accurate, I think, to accept that the citizen is voicing a perception of the truth; that truth being that the family lies deep in the mechanics of social structures.

The multiple discourses of 'Cyclops' pose the question of whether we all share the same language and to what extent we can regard language as the privileged structure that underpins social organisation. After all, it is worth remembering that the size of the Greek polis was limited, according to Plato, by the extent to which a voice could make itself heard in order to facilitate government by conversation, the politics of dialogue (Mumford 79). In *The Odyssey* it is language that undoes the Cyclops, Polyphemus. His attempt to communicate the identity of his attacker is frustrated by the fact that Odysseus has called himself 'Noman', a signifier without a referent. In 'Cyclops' the citizen's monological outlook is likewise ultimately exploded in the realms of language. Intolerance and hatred are defeated by the uncontrollable plurality of verbal signification that renders the fixed, intractable, one-eyed perspective impossible to maintain. As Lacan's analysis of 'The Purloined Letter' demonstrates, the letter exists outside the Law, effecting a blindness on king and police. It avoids the narrowing determinations of authority. The family cannot be conscripted for simplistic political ends because of the plurality of roles it engenders in the social system and because, as an ideology, it is constructed in language.

In poetic language, according to Julia Kristeva, the concept of singularity is destroyed:

the notions of definition, determination, the sign "=" and the very concept of the sign, which presuppose a vertical (hierarchical) division between signifier and signified, cannot be applied to poetic language - by definition an infinity of pairings and combinations. (69)

In the poetic text the concept of univocal identity is also obliterated. In *Ulysses* Bloom is Joyce, Hamlet, Shakespeare, father, and son. In *Finnegans Wake* Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (HCE) is Adam, Christ, Wellington, Caesar, Cromwell, Finnegans, Shem and Shaun, as well as Howth Hill and environs. There is no linguistic and therefore subjective structure smaller than the double. The text cannot transmit an authoritative meaning, rather meanings of the text must be produced by the reader, as Roland Barthes puts it, out of the 'stereographic plurality' of the weave of its signifiers' (1977, 159): 'in the beginning, there was the telephone', the monologue is not possible, the self

and the text are always bound up in a network of communication systems in which discourse must be addressed to some other, even if that other is a part of the self, a 'being-at-the-telephone' (Derrida 1988). Under these circumstances the text cannot transmit a coherently graspable inherent meaning, the gap between reading and writing is erased and the possibility of passive consumption is denied by the demand for the reader's collaboration. As Joyce puts it in *Finnegans Wake*, 'His producers are they not his consumers?' (497.1). A phrase that in itself breaks down the integrity of the bounded, monological, single text by recalling the *Memoirs* (1748) of Laetitia Pilkington which were published in 1928 and in which she refers to the hypocrisy that surrounds the treatment of erring women in the following way: 'Is it not monstrous that our seducers should be our accusers?'. The echo, intentional or otherwise, means that the collaboration between reader and writer is here given not only a religious but also a sexual and a capitalistic connotation. The intertextual renders the range of possible readings uncircumscribable.

As I have already mentioned, Derrida argues that structure becomes perceptible at the moment of its incipient collapse: 'through the incidence of menace, at the moment when imminent danger concentrates our vision...' (1978, 5). This observation is given a literary dimension by Julia Kristeva who argues that the modernist assault on realism marks a revolutionary crisis within social structures, the very economy of this assault is an attack on God, reason and the law (79). Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, according to Roland Barthes in *Writing Degree Zero*, the dominant *écriture* was not understood as being a style at all. Until then it had masqueraded as the innocent, inevitable reflection of reality, 'classical art could have no sense of being a language, for it was language, in other words it was transparent, it flowed and left no deposit' (3). Barthes argues that this form of writing reflected bourgeois ideology that likewise had this air of naturalness and universality. However:

bourgeois *écriture* is not innocent. It does not simply reflect reality. In fact it *shapes* reality in its own image, acting as the institutionalised carrier, transmitter or encoder of the bourgeois way of life and its values. (Hawkes 107)

As the fixed values of bourgeois ideology begin to be challenged and to disintegrate, so Barthes argues this literary style comes under scrutiny:

'classical writing...disintegrated and the whole of literature from Flaubert to the present day, became the problematics of language' (1968, 3). Its exposure as a style in itself leads to a more intense stylistic self-consciousness. Modernism marks the moment of the crisis of structure in which both the nineteenth century/bourgeois form of the text and the nineteenth century/bourgeois form of the family come in for questioning. Both are undermined by an attack on authority across the human sciences that calls into question the inevitability of the narrative that underpins both the family and the novel.

There is no question that for Kristeva, poetic language, the semiotic text is an engagement in an oppositional discourse identical with social and political rebellion. In discussing Roman Jakobson's 1931 article 'The Generation that Wasted its Poets' Kristeva argues that Jakobson intends the ramifications of his argument to extend beyond application to Russian or Soviet society so that the article should be read as positing the general fact that 'a (any) society may be stabilised only if it excludes poetic language' (31). She goes on to state: 'There is no equivalence, but rather, identity between challenging official linguistic codes and challenging official law' (65). This construction of a language that incarnates its own meaning and is intrinsically adversarial sheds light on Samuel Beckett's famous statement in *Our Exagmination* that Joyce's writing 'is not about something, it is that something itself' (14). The ambivalence and doubleness of poetic language is described by Kristeva as 'knowingly the enemy of religion' (125) and thus Joyce could be said to embody in the structure of his actual writing the rebellion against theological and by analogy patriarchal authority that is the thread that runs through the content of all his work. Indeed from a Derridean perspective that posits the idea of writing as 'inaugural' and thus rejects the possibility of the work as the expression of the antecedent idea of the author (1978, 11), it could be argued that it is the anti-genealogical economy of prose itself that dictates Joyce's anti-patriarchalism.

It is the difference between these two positions, the agency attributed to Joyce or language that is an important critical site of debate in an exploration of his deconstruction of patriarchal authority, an assault that would be fundamentally undermined if it were to take place from within patriarchal conventions,

conducted under the aegis of a God-like author/creator. The question is: is Joyce's work demonstrative of a genuine interpretative openness that is deconstructive of hierarchical authority, or does the author intend his work to have an absolute meaning that can be verified by specific interpretative procedures or practices? In which case, does he in fact take back for himself the authority that he appears to cede?

The basis for an examination of Joyce's work as demonstrative of a kind of poststructuralist *jouissance* of the sign rests on the premise that at its heart there is an absence of authority generated by the removal of a meta-language through which to read the text. This facilitates the indefinite deferral of the signifier. Under these circumstances Joyce's work can indeed be seen in Beckett's terms as literally an articulation of language itself. Semiotic theory sees language, post-Saussure, as a system of signs in which meaning is never fully graspable except as the play of absence and negation between signs. Joyce's texts are imbued with this 'constant flickering of presence and absence' that Eagleton notes as determinative of language (188).

In fact one might argue that absence is a structural principle that runs through Joyce's work and is closely tied to the erosion of patriarchal authority in the family. One can, for example, locate in three separate Joyce texts three different types of absence representing the trinity of authority that it is Joyce's declared aim to escape: politics/the nation, religion, patriarchy/the family. 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room' for example opens with the absence of the politician: 'Did Mr Tierney say when he'd be back?' (97) and closes with an elegy to the absent politician, Parnell. Between these opening and closing moments the story incorporates the disparaging comments regarding Tierney of a host of his canvassers, people who are economically dependent on him and should, almost by definition, be singing his praises. Whilst Old Joe, the caretaker, lambastes his son for his ungrateful treatment of his father, the story reveals the ungrateful treatment by his 'sons' of Parnell and Tierney. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Father Arnall argues in Miltonic vein, that the greatest of the torments of hell is the consciousness of loss, the knowledge of the absence of God. Turning to *Ulysses* one might argue that the whole

novel is dominated by the play of absence and presence. Metatextually the absent presence of the father is established by the very title of Joyce's novel which is both a reference to and a displacement of Homer. The story is given impetus by the absence of Rudy Bloom but also of Milly and might be said to be structured around a central absence, Molly's adultery with Blazes Boylan which is not incorporated in the text, or indeed the absence of sexual relations between Bloom and Molly, the possibility of the restoration of which closes the text. For Stephen it is the absence of the father that gives the narrative structure and indeed 'resolution' when he finally meets up with Bloom.

As in semiotic theory, it is clear that the absence that structures the text and the family is never absolute. Indeed as Stephen's meditations on fatherhood in *Ulysses* indicate, it is often through absence itself that the most powerful form of presence can be experienced. Stephen understands that fatherhood derives its authority from mystery, from the absence of necessary connection which makes the father's position unassailable:

On that mystery and not on the Madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. (170)

Stephen's meditations are in tune with Freud's *Totem and Taboo* which describes the origins of patriarchal culture as lying in the primal murder of the father by the sons. The removal of the father leading not to the end of his authority but to its beginning. Clearly then Stephen is identified by Joyce as existing within the belief structures of patriarchal culture. At the same time, positing the fundamental absence of the father also gives a clue as to why his position should be so obsessively considered. Absence is after all the universal inscription of desire and the quest for the resolution of desire, Bloom's quest for Rudy, is what keeps the text in motion by driving the narrative.

If one is arguing that modernist texts, in particular those of Joyce, reveal a preoccupation with absence that can be connected to the removal of the father from his authoritative structuring role in contemporary society, then this must have a consequence for the way in which the author views his relation to his 'creation', the text. In simple terms one might argue that where the author

endorses this loss of patriarchal authority that a similar anti-patriarchalism should be identifiable in his work. In the case of Joyce the application of this idea is problematical. The absence of meta-language through which the author manipulates the response of the reader is tempered in Joyce's work by the fact that he assiduously orchestrated its critical reception during his lifetime. In the process of so doing, he outlined a multiplicity of putative interpretative schemes.

The question of the absence/presence of the father/author has become a key site of Joyce criticism owing, in the main, to the complexity of his later work. In 'positivist' readings of *Finnegans Wake*, favoured by explicators like William Tindall in his *Reader's Guide*, there is an inevitable preference for a view of the work as an attack on order only at the surface level whilst underneath there is locatable a precise structuring that indicates a coherent, subjective authority over the text. Such a reading seems to be superficially attractive, defensible through the discernment of a degree of comprehensibility beneath the apparent chaos. However, Julia Kristeva shows this to be a naive response. As soon as the word becomes ambiguous then the 'author' becomes a writer by abdicating his control over the signifying dimension of the text and makes of the reader a writer. The apparent order beneath the chaos of *Finnegans Wake*, its 'artful disorder' (126.9), is simply the mechanism whereby the text generates signification in collusion with the reader and beyond the appeal of the novelist. The fact that there is this elaborate subtextual level of organisation does indeed affirm the presence of the writer just at the moment that it denies that presence an authoritative status. Indeed Derek Attridge in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce* has argued that the very length of *Finnegans Wake* guarantees the depth and complexity of an interconnectedness that precludes the possibility of mastery, including authorial control (23). Even a critic such as Frances Restuccia who, in discussing *Ulysses*, argues that the author's presence can be felt everywhere in the text, eventually concludes that the result of this apparent domination in which the word of the author transcends subjective boundaries and thus opens the possibility that the whole novel is a single articulation, is that the author becomes 'textualised, unidentifiable, indefinable' (114).

I have discussed in the preceding paragraphs the extent to which Joyce may have deliberately undermined his position as 'author' of his work in sympathy with the late nineteenth century challenge to the legitimacy of the authority of the father in the family. A growing perception in the late nineteenth century that what masqueraded as truth was in fact a monological assertiveness which prevented the emergence of dissenting voices and alternative perspectives may have lent energy to his literary inventiveness. I am certainly not arguing that these ideas were fully present in Joyce's consciousness or that he would have articulated what he was doing in this way. Indeed there are some critics who would question the agency of the writer altogether and who therefore argue that the removal of the authority of the father from the novel is a consequence of a new literary horizon that draws a distinction between the notion of the 'work' and the 'text'.

Roland Barthes, for instance, argues in *Image, Music, Text* that the text is always 'paradoxical' because it exists beyond the limitations of convention. It functions through the concept of intertextuality which as a denial of origins is an affront to monistic philosophies that base their authority on the identification of a direct source of power. This idea of the text as a 'tissue of quotations' with no unified or even necessarily ascertainable source comes into conflict with the kind of power exercised within the family in which the child is subject to the authority of the author/father:

The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text between of another text: to try to find the "sources"; the "influences" of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, intractable, and yet *already read*: they are quotations without inverted commas. (140)

So, unlike the work which is bound up in a whole process of filiation, to society and to the author, the text 'reads without the inscription of the father' (161). The inescapability of intertextuality means that the author can no longer pose as the father of the text. As a consequence of this loss of his authority the author cannot guarantee the monological meaning or truth of his writing.

This is the condition of writing that *Finnegans Wake* articulates; it is a work like the book in Borges' 'In the Garden of Forked Paths' which in attempting

complete circularity, dissolves the possibility of a monological future. In effect then *Finnegans Wake* incarnates an homology in Joyce's prose. The fact that it is a chaotic text without recourse to a guiding authority is consistent with its being a work about the fall of the father, his unlocatable unknowability. This is indicated according to Margot Norris by the multiplicity of the father's names:

In contrast to that certainty of identity which makes the symbolic father the figure of the law, the *Wake's* father figure emerges indeterminable, dependent, and variable by name. He is called "Cloudy father! Unsure! Nongood!" (500.18); and he resides, via initials, in the phrase "Haud certo ergo" (263.28), "nothing certain therefore". (61)

Therefore the text exists without the presence of the law and authority.

Seamus Deane echoes this point in his introduction to *Finnegans Wake* when he describes its citations, its 'stolentelling' (424.35), its fragmentary references to other authors, as an assault on the canon and therefore on authority. Indeed the hierarchical relationship normally inscribed through quotation is disturbed when the establishment of origins becomes obscure, or even announces itself by its absence. One can go even further than this. Both Barthes and Deane are arguing that it is in specific forms of writing, or in specific textual structures, that the absence of the father/author is emphasized. In 'The Death of the Author' Barthes addresses the problem of the location of authority within the text, he says:

Writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing. (1977, 142)

Writing is defined by Barthes as the narration of facts that serve no function beyond their own existence, when this is the case 'the author enters into his own death' (142).

It is my argument that where this form of writing appears it is linked to a general cultural challenge to the authority of the father/author. Beyond these viewpoints and at an even greater level of abstraction is Jacques Derrida's contention that writing itself (rather than its particular forms) may undermine the principle of hierarchy upon which the family is based. In *Dissemination* Derrida claims that the father/son relationship is not a simple metaphor for *logos*

because it is *logos* itself that underpins the possibility of this relation, the very notion of paternity is constituted within language:

Only a power of speech can have a father. The father is always father to a speaking/living being. In other words, it is precisely *logos* that enables us to perceive and investigate something like paternity. (80)

Derrida argues that the whole tradition of western metaphysics is premised on the privilege accorded the self-presence of speech whose authority is guaranteed by its engendering father who remains with his creation. Writing, however, destroys the living unicity of speech, it depends upon absence, the disappearance of the father, 'writing is parricidal' (164). It no longer has an identifiable, knowable origin. Writing is the defenceless son left to wander in the world:

From the position of the holder of the sceptre, the desire of writing is indicated, designated, and denounced as a desire for orphanhood and patricidal subversion. (77)

Writing is the miserable son...the son is *lost*. His impotence is truly that of the orphan as much as that of a justly or unjustly persecuted patricide...Writing can thus be attacked, bombarded with unjust reproaches that only the father could dissipate - thus assisting his son - if the son had not, precisely killed him. (146)

Joyce's effort to efface his paternal relation to the text, Derrida implies, is irrelevant, since all writing anyway amounts to the destruction of the father/author. Joyce's work can, however, be said to reveal a certain degree of paradox in this respect. Even if one accepts that Joyce deliberately attempts to elide his presence as a constraining, dictatorial authority in the novels and therefore welcomes his dissolution in language, one might consider that the interpretative schemes he later issued run counter to this intention and express a desire to exercise ownership over his texts after they have been released to the world. It is almost as if in writing the novels themselves, Joyce is conscious of the need to destroy the father in the text, but having written them and made them public he realises that their father is in fact himself and that it is his destruction that they signify.

Part of the sense of this Derridean loss of authority for the father is given a highly charged and physical presence in the scene in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* where Stephen returns with his father to Cork. While Simon Dedalus searches for the desk in Queen's College where he carved his initials

(that is, searches for his identity in writing), Stephen is disturbed at finding the word 'Foetus' inscribed in a different desk. The fragility of writing is mirrored by the vulnerability of the object that this word represents. There is effectively no author to this writing, unlike of course in the case of carved initials, it is orphaned, as all writing must be. In searching for the father in writing what Stephen finds is the orphaned son. Before it has had a chance to achieve itself, to be born, writing is occupied by the reader who conjures up his own vision and his own meanings irrespective of those that may have been intended by the author. Stephen's response as son and putative writer is to hurry from this confrontation with his own death and obey the authority of his father's voice to view the only inscription that can aspire to the condition of speech, the name-of-the-father as identified by the writing father:

Stephen's name was called. He hurried down the steps of the theatre so as to be as far away from the vision as he could be and, peering closely at his father's initials, hid his flushed face. (87)

The damage however has been done, in the word 'Foetus' Stephen has glimpsed the estrangement of the father from the son, an estrangement that is the condition of writing and that will increasingly underpin his relationship with Simon.

Derrida's observations relate to writing per se. However, there are clearly some forms of literature that attempt to conceal or mitigate the defencelessness of writing by establishing the text as its own interpretative authority. The deliberate courting of the loss of this authority, on the other hand, might be said to be characteristic of modernism. The destruction of monological authority in the text, the patriarchal position, raises the problem of the identity of the writing subject or narrative voice which can be felt throughout Joyce's work.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, for example, can be read as an engagement with this problem. The narrative opens in the voice of the father as the articulator of the child's identity: 'He was Baby Tuckoo' (19). It then works towards, as *Bildungsroman* or *Künstlerroman* should, the gradual and further evolution of the subject's identity. Joyce ties the development of Stephen to the development of the form of the narrative so that as his identity begins to take shape he comes to take possession of his story in his own voice.

This process reaches its logical conclusion when the final few pages of the book become Stephen's diary entries. In *Ulysses* the narrative often inhabits the voice of the character and thus erodes the gap between presenter and presentation. The lack of an objective, authoritative position in the narrative removes the repressive super-ego from the text so that the father becomes exposed.

A good example of this occurs in the 'Nausicaa' episode of *Ulysses* where the narrative opens in the second-hand romantic language of women's magazines: 'The summer evening had begun to fold the world in its mysterious embrace' (284), the discourse inhabited by Gerty MacDowell, the protagonist of this episode. There is, however, nothing romantic or second-hand about the domestic violence that Gerty has experienced at the hands of her father. By inhabiting Gerty's voice the narrative reveals the way in which patriarchy functions through the internalisation of identity attributions which serve to reinforce suppression:

A sterling good daughter was Gerty just like a second mother in the house, a ministering angel too with a little heart worth its weight in gold. (291)

Precisely the same narratological method can also be seen in *Dubliners*. 'Eveline' is apparently the story of a young woman poised to leave her home to marry a sailor. I say apparently because as Derek Attridge points out in *The Cambridge Companion* it is impossible to determine the nature of the narrating consciousness (6). The free indirect style of the narration means that one can never be certain whether one is privileged to have an insight into Eveline's thoughts or whether these thoughts are being mediated. There is a certain ambiguity in the narration that undercuts the notion of this story as straightforward. It expresses, for example, a deeply ambivalent attitude towards Frank who is 'manly' and 'bronzed'; these impersonal, standardised adjectives lead one to suspect that perhaps Frank is a fabrication. At the most obvious level the story reveals yet another history of violence at the hands of the father: 'latterly he had begun to threaten her' (41) and an oppressive patriarchal culture in which the daughter, despite domestic oppression cannot break away from the home. As I have said, however, there is also a sense, because of the method of narration and the speed with which it apparently

moves from reflection to action, that in fact the whole scenario of Frank and the trip to Buenos Ayres is a fantasy that Eveline has concocted as compensation for her loneliness. The point is that the reader simply isn't in a position to be able to judge the significance of what is being narrated. In a curious way the reader's position mirrors that of Eveline herself. Just as the story reveals Eveline's desire for the security that can only be guaranteed by the father so too is the lost reader made aware by the absence of this authority in the text of the insecurity that results from its removal.

Joyce recognises what is lost in the process of removing this paternal authority and yet he remains committed to the project. What it means, according to Colin MacCabe, is that the text is forced to accept its written status and the fact that it cannot 'staunch the haemorrhage of interpretation threatened by the material of language' (15). MacCabe argues that of course fissures exist in every work thus allowing Barthes to 'read' Balzac in *S/Z*, but whereas this reading has to take place against the meta-language, in Joyce there is no privileged or dominating discourse. If modernism can be understood as a reaction to the disintegration in the late nineteenth century of the authority of the father then the challenge to the master is bound to translate into a challenge to the master discourse.

On the most general level Joyce's reluctance to name *Finnegans Wake*, to give it any title other than *Work in Progress* can be seen as part of the struggle to resist the culturally authoritative position of the naming father. On one hand this reveals a typically modernist strategy that cuts across art forms, not to restrict the associations of the work by directing response through a statically authoritative nomination. More interestingly, for a work whose Viconian model is circular and which ends in the middle of its first sentence this can be seen as an entirely appropriate designation. If, as Freud notes in his essay on Leonardo da Vinci, the artist's work is always incomplete because it never fulfils that plenitude that is perfection (*Art and Literature* 154) then *Finnegans Wake* can be seen as paradigmatic of the artist's work, always in progress, always moving forward to a conclusion that it can only ever reach as a beginning.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that one of the things which distinguishes modernism from nineteenth century realism is that the nineteenth century texts contain within themselves the key to their own interpretation. I have described this key as the patriarchal aspect of those texts because it is the purpose of an ideology like patriarchy to fix meaning and identity by providing an explanatory narrative for events. This orientation is exposed not only by the form of Joyce's texts but also by their content which often highlights the role the father plays in the attempt to monologically dictate identity and meaning. One thing that all the authors in this thesis would subscribe to is the proposition that the imposition of identity is an attempt to exert control over others. One of Joyce's most telling accounts of this patriarchal desire to control identity is 'The Dead'. The opening words of the story: 'Lily, the caretaker's daughter' (138) seem to suggest an unproblematic notion of patriarchally constructed identity. The rest of the story, however, serves to undermine this idea. Gabriel Conroy arrives at the Misses Morkan's annual dance armed with what seems like patriarchal assurance. An assurance which the story shows is shallow and misplaced. Almost immediately, he is confounded in his attempt to impose identity on the women around him. Chatting to Lily he fixes her narrative for her - schooling followed closely by marriage:

"O then," said Gabriel quickly, "I suppose we'll be going to your wedding one of these fine days with your young man, eh?"

The girl glanced back at him over her shoulder and said with great bitterness:

"The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you."

Gabriel coloured, as if he felt he had made a mistake... (140)

Gabriel's attempt to impose a trite, assumed identity on Lily has failed. The rest of the story will reveal that it is in fact Gabriel himself, with 'the face whose expression always puzzled him when he saw it in a mirror' (170) who lacks a secure sense of identity. He is in fact accused by Molly Ivors of being a 'West Briton' (147). It is over his wife, Gretta, that Gabriel attempts to exert the most control. However, she, like Lily, reveals herself to be more complex than he had imagined. She wriggles out of his neatly constructed patriarchal grasp. When they return to their hotel room Gabriel is frustrated by Gretta's distance: 'he longed to be master of her strange mood' (169). He is fired by a

sentimental sexual desire for Gretta, only to discover that she is thinking about a former 'lover', Michael Furey. Far from taking possession of Gretta, Gabriel is forced to recognise and accept that she will always remain a mystery, inviolate and independent.

That the patriarchal desire to ascribe identity is a mechanism of control is also revealed in *Ulysses*. Stephen is given, by Mulligan, the name 'Kinch, the knifeblade'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* has one of the meanings of the word as being a noose, sometimes placed over the tongue of a horse in order to exercise control. The equine association suggests servitude, a servitude that involves the loss of the power of the word and is therefore suggestive of Mulligan's attempt to exert his authority over Stephen through control of the logos. Stephen grows into the name Mulligan gives him in 'Circe' where the drunken withdrawal of rationality leaves him with 'no voice' (422).

I have tried to show in the last few pages how textual politics inhabit those discourses of power that also determine the social and cultural position of the family. Emphasis on the dialogism of the text is therefore a challenge to the monological exercise of power in the social and cultural spheres. Thus the construction of narration within the text, its very form, feeds into debates about the functional distribution of power within the family, as Colin MacCabe puts it: 'The struggle against narrative is the struggle against the father' (64). As I stated in the introduction, this thesis follows the theory of narrative that Edward Said sets out in *Beginnings*; a theory that stresses the intimate connection between narrative and family structure. Of course this is hardly a new idea. Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* put the family at the very origins of narrative and revealed the disturbing consequences that the disruption of the natural order of the family narrative could have both for the identity of the subject within that narrative and for the form of the text itself.

It is in his search for knowledge, in his construction of narrative that Oedipus discovers that he has murdered the father. Without becoming too involuted I think it is fair to say that if narrative reveals the truth, the truth that it reveals is the truth of narrative. That is that the son kills the father. All narrative is

Oedipal. Given his familiarity with the works of Sophocles it would indeed be surprising if Freudian psychoanalysis did not share this understanding of narrative. Accordingly one of the fundamental concepts underlying psychoanalysis builds on a sophisticated conception of narrative in which the past of the subject is not completed but may be altered by his present, and in that alteration a restructuring of the subject may take place. The subject in psychoanalytical theory therefore is never stable or static but always in process, a 'work in progress'. He doesn't have a past but a future that has already happened so that he doesn't reclaim his past but recreates it in the process of becoming:

that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now by reflection from that which then I shall be. (*Ulysses* 160)

This compacting of time takes its structure from the relationship between father and son that, from the very start of *Ulysses*, Stephen is obsessed by and that he expresses in his musings on consubstantiality in 'Scylla and Charybdis'. If the future is sister of the past that is because the son is immanent in the father and vice versa: 'He is in my father. I am in his son' (*Ulysses* 160). Obviously this condition reaches its apotheosis in *Finnegans Wake* in which all the characters are aspects of the dreamer. Shem and Shaun represent two sides of HCE who is all-inclusive: 'You and I are in him...' (130). This is the Sabellian heresy 'that the Father was Himself His own son' (*Ulysses* 171). It shuts down the possibility of conventional narrative which is dependent on consequential cultural positionality, that is one thing leading to another. To erode the gap between father and son (as Joyce does in *Ulysses* by presenting himself as both Bloom and Stephen and by making Bloom a son without a father, and a father without a son, like the Shakespeare of *Hamlet*, or like God) is to deny the linear progressivity of narrative and to initiate a temporal circularity. This is precisely the condition of the psychoanalytical text, and the Oedipal state. It results in the confusion, perhaps even the compacting, of past and present that takes place in 'Circe'. Ultimately this idea leads to *Finnegans Wake* where the distinction between father and son is obliterated and the narrative implodes between its mythical and its psychoanalytic dimensions.

Joyce then can be seen as quite explicitly testing the extent to which narrative can be constructed along different lines to the realist novel or the patriarchal family. In so doing, he reveals by default how the realist narrative structure gives the subject in the novel coherence and a stable identity. The coherence and stable identity that patriarchal ideology would claim is the product of its own organisation. It is clear therefore that in testing the bounds of literary structure, Joyce is also testing the limits of the family and suggesting the likely consequences for the subject of removing him from the security of the patriarchal context.

One of the ways in which Joyce's texts interrogate the patriarchal notion of inviolable selfhood is through their own intertextual engagements and echoes which tend to deconstruct the fixed relationship of lineage. *Finnegans Wake* reads *Ulysses* and vice versa so that quite literally 'coming events cast their shadows before' (*Ulysses* 135) or, 'the coming offence can send our shudders before' (*Finnegans Wake* 238.1). These texts also set themselves up as sites of intratextuality so that phrases are caught up and repeated within the body of the text itself: 'A tale told of Shaun or Shem' (*Finnegans Wake* 215.35), becomes later in the same text, 'his tail toiled of spume and spawn' (324.5); Mrs. Breen's seven 'yes' words in 'Circe' (367) anticipate Molly's climax in 'Penelope'. All of these examples serve to undermine the integrity of self-identity, of the individual and the text.

As so often in Joyce's work the tendency that can be found from *Dubliners* through to *Ulysses*, in this case the tendency to dissolve securely held subjectivity, has its most advanced expression in *Finnegans Wake*. HCE is a universal figure existing beyond time, he is the 'Immensipater' (342.26), the 'general omnibus character' (444.02). ALP is 'annyma' (426.03), she is the 'comer forth from Thenanow' (311.13). These figures are the primordial parents whose omnipresence guarantees that the whole of human history is reduced, encapsulated, or repeated in the form of family antagonisms. In *Finnegans Wake* Oedipus appears time and again behind the conflicts between Willingdone and Shimar Shin, H.C.Earwicker and the Cad, King Mark and Tristran, Buckley and the Russian General. The significance of these conflicts

goes beyond the simply intersubjective since they are also at another level the internal conflicts of the constructed, unintegrated ego. This idea is illustrated by the simultaneous representation of the 'subject' in successive stages, that is as, for example, Anna Livia Plurabelle, Issy, Kate, and the twenty-eight girls who are all aspects of the same self. In terms of the authority of the family it further distances the notion of stable 'source' upon which the father's power is based. Indeed in *Finnegans Wake* the very distinction between father and son that is so obsessively explored is also repeatedly elided.

Identity is dissolved in language in *Finnegans Wake* so that Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker becomes HCE, the letters themselves operating throughout the text and redefining the object to which they apparently refer. This emphasis on the construction of character through language becomes particularly problematic where language 'turns, tropes and inflections' (Lacan 1981, 76) are shared intersubjectively. If the subject is constructed through language then to share precisely the same language is to affront the possibility of individuated subjectivity:

Writing breaks the "subject" apart into multiple doers, into possible places of retention or loss of meaning within "discourse" and "history", it inscribes not the original - paternal law, but *other* laws that can enunciate themselves differently beginning with these pronominal, transsubstantive agencies. (Kristeva 113)

In other words if identity is broken apart in language then the pronominal system of identity ascription subverts the ideology of patriarchy by rendering the subject in language plural, never self-coincident. The confusion inaugurated by the pronominal system is demonstrated in Joyce's work by the way in which Molly refers to herself as 'us' in 'Calypso' and by her use of the pronoun 'he' in 'Penelope':

hell write about me lover and mistresses publicly too with our 2
photographs in all the papers when he becomes famous O but then
what am I going to do about him though
no thats no way for him has he no manners nor no refinement.
(638)

The confusion here lies in the fact that Molly as wife and mother in patriarchal culture should only have one sexual partner, one 'he'. Here, however, there is the possible compaction of three simultaneously: Stephen, Bloom, and Boylan. In *Finnegans Wake* Isobel's pronominal confusion is so pronounced that many commentators regard her as being schizophrenic. There is certainly a

bifurcation of subjective identity in language that is voiced by her self-references: 'We. We. Issy done that, I confesh' (459.6). In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Joyce emphasizes through a confusion of possessive pronouns the way in which language ties the subject into a determining matrix of political discourse: 'Crossing Stephen's, that is, my green, remembered that his countrymen and not mine had invented what Cranly the other night called our religion' (215). Emerging from Joyce's work then is the very clear sense that there is a fundamental crisis of identity consequent upon the removal of the authority of the father.

An interesting theory of the consequences of the loss of patriarchal authority in society which can be applied to Joyce's novels emerges from two works by René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* and *Violence and the Sacred*. Girard's thesis is that violence issues from desire and desire fixes on the object of someone else's desire. In effect desire desires desire itself. The most powerful object of desire for the son thus becomes the mother who is desired by the father. However, the boy then finds himself caught in the double-bind of the super-ego which demands at once 'be like your father' and 'you may not be like your father'. Girard argues that the father can only be taken as the model of desire under certain circumstances:

the father can only become an obstacle when the diminution of his paternal authority has brought him into a direct confrontation with his son, obliging him to occupy the same sphere. The Oedipus complex appears most plausible in a society in which the father's authority has been greatly weakened but not completely destroyed; that is, in western society during the course of recent centuries. (1979, 188)

If the father remained separate in his authority the identification could not take place and there would be no possibility of conflict between father and son because they would occupy completely distinct spheres. Girard's argument can be summed up in the memorable phrase: 'the Oedipus complex waxes as the father wanes' (1979, 190). The evidence for the validity of this position can be found everywhere in Joyce's work. On a purely empirical level it is full of examples of the failure of patriarchal authority and its abusive nature.

In *Dubliners* there are: the pederast in 'An Encounter', Little Chandler in 'A Cloud', Farrington in 'Counterparts', the stick-wielding father in 'Eveline', the

uncle in 'Araby', all of whom wield an unimpressive, derisory authority based on exploitation and inadequacy.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Stephen, and indeed the rest of the family, suffer at the hands of the father's blithe irresponsibility. The erasure of the gap that should exist between father and son is consciously brought about by Simon Dedalus who claims to wish to inscribe his relations with his son on a brotherly basis: ' "I don't believe in playing the stern father. I don't believe a son should be afraid of his father"' (88). Notwithstanding this aim, Simon seems to wish to humiliate Stephen on their trip to Cork because he feels threatened by him: 'his growth is his father's decline, his youth his father's envy, his friend his father's enemy' (*Ulysses* 170). Indeed one suspects that Simon's wish to erase the distance between him and his son and to give their relations a fraternal basis is an attempt to deny the narrative of decline that the growth of his son implies. Whereas the nineteenth century patriarch has a secure identity - the author of the *History of British India* - for Mill, Stephen's father is subject to a bewildering series of incarnations:

- A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small inventor, a drinker, a goodfellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a tax gatherer, a bankrupt, and at present a praiser of his own past. (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* 208)

If his own identity is so radically unstable how can the father hope to anchor the identity of his offspring.

In *Ulysses* Bloom likewise is subject to a series of nominal transformations which indicate a lack of a stable social and cultural identity. He is Virag, Flower, Bloom, Boom (in the *Telegraph*) and Poldy. However, for Bloom this polylogical identity gives him access to a universal sympathy that makes him a species of everyman: 'he rued for her who bore whoso she might be or wheresoever' (319). Bloom represents a new kind of father figure, one who is deprived of his patriarchal authority, his sexual potency, and who is open to others and to otherness. Indeed Bloom seems to positively encourage his unmaning, as if he wishes programmatically to escape patriarchal constructions. Not only does he leave the relationship between Molly and

Boylan to follow its own course, but it is possible to argue that towards the end of *Ulysses* he even plans to offer Molly to Stephen.¹

In his biography of Joyce, Richard Ellmann stresses the importance of the idea of the family in Joyce's work in general and in *Ulysses* in particular. He says that 'the theme of family love, the love of parent for child and of child for parent, runs covertly throughout *Ulysses*' (371) and that 'paternity is a more powerful motif in the book than sexual love' (371). It is with this in mind that one can justly say that Bloom's relationship with Stephen is one way of reading the structure of the novel. For both the nascent artist and the father, the idea of creation, production or paternity is rarely out of their thoughts. Thus in the 'Hades' episode, Bloom sharing a carriage with Simon Dedalus, is led to meditate on his own familial situation by the sight of Stephen through the carriage window:

If little Rudy had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house.

Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son. Me in his eyes. (73)

The point is of course that if *Ulysses* dwells so extensively on the theme of paternity that is because it is perceived to be problematic. The death of Rudy has closed down the patriarchal transmission of authority from father to son. The association of Bloom and Stephen is an association on an affiliative model. If they represent father and son they do so outside of the genealogical assumptions of patriarchy. The theme of paternity is therefore everywhere present in *Ulysses* in a negative guise. The only positive father figure in the novel is one whose son has died, who therefore in effect presides over the death of the patriarchal economy and moves towards an affiliative structuring of relations.

Reading further Bloom's thoughts about his dead son on the way to Paddy Dignam's funeral, one comes across the phrase 'From me. Just a chance' (73). In other words, not only is Rudy dead, but the novel also draws attention, as it does elsewhere, to the problematic nature of paternity, its essential unknowableness. In *The Novel as Family Romance* Christine Van Boheemen

1. Both Suzette Henke, in *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* (156) and William Empson in *Using Biography* (224) argue along these lines.

argues that the nineteenth century novel has an 'epigenetic plot' (21), that is it seeks to integrate beginning and end in a movement that enables the return to origins to explain the present. However, *Ulysses* challenges the principle of the paternal origin, God the Father is replaced by the mother. As I have said earlier in this chapter, and as I will argue in the conclusion, I do not believe that Joyce intends to replace the authority of the father with the authority of the mother. If Bloom worships maternity that is because he is scored with a patriarchal consciousness that venerates (re)production. The irony of this is of course that Bloom, the Jew, the law-giver, is the anti-patriarchal talisman of the text.

One could of course read Joyce's depiction of fathers in two ways. In a reading influenced by realism one could argue that it is the author holding a mirror up to his society, representing fathers as they exist in the social realm. I have argued that the late nineteenth century witnessed an assault on patriarchy. It may be that with this diminution of authority the abuses of fathers could come to light. However, I would argue that more significant is the intrinsic connection between the politics of writing itself and the representation of the family in the novel. Therefore whilst the form of Joyce's work foregrounds the absence/removal of patriarchal authority and indeed suggests the impossibility of its existence, this is matched by the content of the works which foreground the contemporary demise of this authority and its undesirability.

I think therefore that one would need to be extremely wary about accepting Ellmann's view of Joyce's work. If one turns, for example, to *Finnegans Wake* the circular cannibalistic narrative leads to a depiction of incest that is profoundly disruptive of the family associations that Ellmann wishes to invoke. In that novel the crisis in the family structure predicated on the erosion of patriarchy leads to an obsessive concern, at the level of content, with the 'ensectuous' (29.30) relationships of the family and the promotion by Shaun/Jaun of 'love through the usual channels, cisternbrotherly' (436.14). The attempt by HCE to have 'unlawful converse' (144.31) with his daughter suggests through the pun that this very relationship is one in which the logos itself violates the patriarchal law. Throughout *Finnegans Wake* Shaun

constructs for himself the dream of living with the sister, a dream that is however clouded by the presence of the authoritative father (450). Shaun is insistent that if Isobel is to engage in incestuous practices then it would be better to undertake them with a brother rather than a father, he proffers himself as a candidate. In the King Mark/Finn MacCool, Tristan/Dermot, Isolde/Grania (II.4) set of correspondences it is the relationship between the father and son that is foregrounded through their competitive sexual rivalry.

The guilt and repression surrounding an incestuous crime is one of the principal recurring themes of the novel. Towards the 'end' of the book the full incestuous relations within the family are revealed by projecting them onto a Roman melange:

He is considered to have committed *droit d'oreiller*, simple infidelities with Felicia, a virgin, and to be practising for unnatural coits with Eugenius and Jeremias, two or three philadelphians. Honophrious, Felicia, Eugenius and Jeremias are consanguineous to the lowest degree. (572.22-6)

Honophrious/HCE fulfils as father a feudal role with the allusion to the mediaeval *droit de seigneur* which guaranteed baronial sexual power over vassals by the appropriation of the bride on her wedding night.

I have stressed throughout this chapter and this thesis what I consider to be the anti-patriarchal nature of Joyce's work. However, it would be disingenuous to suggest that this is in any sense a generally accepted and uncontentious notion in Joyce criticism. It is well-known² that Joyce was familiar with the late nineteenth/early twentieth century debate on women's rights and equality issues - indeed he published his essay attacking the Irish Literary Theatre, 'The Day of the Rabblement', jointly in 1901 with an essay opposing the segregation of the sexes in university education: 'A Forgotten Aspect of the University Question' by Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. Furthermore in a letter to Nora of August 1904 he shows an awareness of the destructive impact that the contemporary structure of the family had had on his mother:

My mind rejects the whole present social order and Christianity - home, the recognised virtues, classes of life, and religious doctrines. How could I like the idea of home? My home was simply a middle-class affair ruined by spendthrift habits which I have inherited. My

2. See for example Bonnie Kime Scott, *Joyce and Feminism*.

mother was slowly killed, I think, by my father's ill-treatment, by years of trouble, and by my cynical frankness of conduct. When I looked on her face as she lay in her coffin - a face grey and wasted with cancer - I understood that I was looking on the face of a victim and I cursed the system which had made her a victim. (qtd. by Richard Ellmann, 169)

This maternal plight is given expression in *Finnegans Wake*:

Amn't I up since the damp dawn, marthared mary allacook, with Corrigan's pulse and varicoarse veins, my pramaxle smashed, Alice Jane in decline and my oneeyed mongrel twice run over, soaking and bleaching boiler rags, and sweating cold, a widow like me, for to deck my tennis champion son, the laundryman with the lavandier flannels? (214.22-8)

Here Joyce outlines some of his central ideas about the family and its connection to all other forms of authority, the idea of matricide, and the position of the mother within society as inevitably oppressed. However, some critics have suggested that any attack on patriarchy in Joyce's work takes place from within patriarchal assumptions. Thus Suzette Henke says of Bloom's encounter with Bella/Bello in 'Circe' and his transformation into woman that this does nothing to disrupt culturally inscribed power relations; there is merely a transference of a ubiquitous phallocentric authority from male to female:

the semiology of gender remains unchanged...Even the comedy of language cannot alter the binary codes of gender or the deeply embedded sex-roles inscribed in societal consciousness. (116)

Likewise Christine Van Boheemen argues that although *Ulysses* is profoundly disruptive of patriarchal structures, that ultimately Joyce gives flesh to the feminine in order to protect his patriarchal possession of *Geist*, spirit. I think the dispute between those critics who see Joyce's work as profoundly disruptive of patriarchy and those, like Henke, who see it as reinscribing patriarchal relations at another level, is the product of readings that either give precedence to form or content.

Molly Bloom is quite often the chief point of conflict in this debate. Bonnie Kime Scott, for example, gives a lengthy list of critical attitudes towards Molly, from *Gea Tellus* to devilish whore (159). Kime Scott implies that the source of this critical diversity is that Molly's discourse is itself contradictory. John Gross says that Molly's language can be described as 'peevish, slatternly and small-minded' (71) and Henke describes it as infused with phallocentric constructions of desire (130). I would argue, however, that it is the form the discourse takes that is its most significant aspect. The form of this discourse deals a far

stronger blow to patriarchy than any direct statement by Molly of non-patriarchal attitudes could do because in contradistinction to those who would argue that *Ulysses* attacks patriarchy from within patriarchal conventions, Molly's speech involving a new rhythm, a new sense of punctuation, embodies and reveals how patriarchy can be undone. It doesn't state, it shows, and in showing it enacts. In a narrative that is conjunctive rather than consequential there is no hierarchy wherein authority can reside. One thing simply leads to another unnecessarily but inevitably, there is no privileging of before or after, no cause and effect. Everything is always present and therefore of equal value. It is sometimes argued that Molly is a patriarchal stereotype and that Joyce annexes the culturally powerful position of artist to the male. I have already shown through my discussion of Joyce's *Dubliners* story 'The Dead' that Joyce was attentive to the patriarchal structuring of women's position in society and assiduous in deflating the male artist's lack of imagination in attempting to constrain her to this narrative. If Molly fulfils patriarchal stereotypes she also overturns them. Thus in 'Ithaca' Bloom constructs a list of her lovers (601) expressing a sense of the uncontainable sexual voracity of Molly which is undermined in her reduction of this list of suitors in 'Penelope' to merely being one of men who have shown an interest in her. Furthermore one could question to what extent Stephen is to be seen as exemplary of patriarchal potency through the medium of art. After all he has produced nothing, whereas Molly is a practising and successful artist in her own right.

It is important, I think, not to assume that Joyce necessarily approves or endorses the actions or views of Stephen. One should note that Stephen is literally scared to death of the family. He perceives the family as that which will destroy all his hopes and ambitions. Joyce's treatment of Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* may be said to focus on this question of the extent to which the individual can divorce himself from his material environment and in a sense this book is unlike others in the Joyce oeuvre because it 'concludes' with the isolated individual whereas *Dubliners*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake* all tend to dissolve personality and 'conclude' in the feminine (Lewiecki-Wilson 121). The final chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* reveals the full squalor of the Dedalus home, the domineering but ineffectual father, the

self-sacrificial disapproving but devoted mother and Stephen attempting to remain withdrawn and detached. This process of detachment is so advanced by the end of the novel that Richard Ellmann argues that the diary entries illustrate that Stephen is 'islanded' and can no longer communicate with anyone in Ireland (358). In this respect he may be contrasted with Gabriel, another Joyce avatar, who at the start of 'The Dead' experiences the family as a stifling irritant, forced as he is to go through a routine he feels ill-inclined to pursue but who, by the end of the story, has undergone the epiphanic shattering of his civilised veneer and been forced to realise his vital connection with the whole of humanity.

There is clearly then a tension in Joyce's work between the almost unrealisable community man that Gabriel might become and that Bloom in a way is, and the modernist commitment to self-definition, and an authentic individuality similar to that expressed by Ursula in *Women in Love* and given an aesthetic definition in Stephen's description to Lynch of his notion of the artwork as 'selfbounded and selfcontained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which it is not' (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* 184). However, this business of disconnection is not quite as straightforward as Stephen as nascent artist would like to believe. However much Stephen may physically distance himself from his environment he cannot escape the dictates of his super-ego which makes him inevitably the product of 'nationality, language, and religion' and the attempts to 'fly by those nets' (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* 177) a lifelong engagement with the psyche: '(he taps his brow) But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king' (*Ulysses* 481).

Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson has contrasted Stephen's narrative of growth to individuality to Paul Morel's in *Sons and Lovers* in a gendered way. She argues that because Stephen attempts to experience reality from a solitary perspective, that his narrative is male and exclusionary. Paul's struggle towards selfhood, on the other hand, is a struggle towards engagement with the other. It is a female, inclusionary narrative (126).

I agree that power over the paternal word which Father Arnall wields like a sword in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is part of the strategy of Stephen as artist in gaining control of material reality, neutralising and avoiding debilitating contact with it. In confessing his sins Stephen seeks to control his experience through a ritualised discourse that disables its potentially destructive power. Experience is regulated through language whose effect is guaranteed by a father confessor.³ It is this retreat into the aestheticism of the word, into art, through which Stephen sublimates his desire and is therefore able to avoid the possibility of contamination through sympathetic connection. This is also the point that is made through Bloom's written relationship with Martha, the staving off of the world through the word. However, by the time of *Ulysses* Stephen finds the retreat into the word a less viable means of combating the angst that arises out of his recognition of the conflict between the need to save his sister, Dilly, and his self-commitment to his sense of artistic destiny that requires that he avoid the consuming entrapment of family relationships:

'She is drowning. Agenbite. Save her. Agenbite. All against us. She will drown me with her, eyes and hair. Lank coils of seaweed hair around me, my heart, my soul. Salt green death.

We.

Agenbite of inwit. Inwit's agenbite.

Misery! Misery!' (200)

This is a crystallisation of Stephen's attitude in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Primogeniture has upheld his position in the world at the expense of the rest of the family. He is pushed upwards through their being forced down: 'All that had been denied them had been freely given to him, the eldest: but the quiet glow of evening showed him in their faces no sign of rancour' (145). The harmony of the siblings that is imaged by their singing is later shattered in the novel by the family's relentless decline in fortune.

By the time of the final part of the novel, Stephen and his father represent twin poles of tyrannical authority and the music of the family has become the

3. Michel Foucault describes 'western man' as a 'confessing animal' (1990, 59), and says that it is the ritual of confession itself that atones for the sinner: 'it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation' (1990, 62). Bloom himself feels the attraction: 'Confession. Everyone wants to' (*Ulysses* 48).

monotonous stichomythia of deferred responsibility reflecting the refusal of the father and of the son to involve themselves with the struggle of the family. Stephen's belief, expressed in *Ulysses*, that he is unable to save his sister is a perception that he cannot help both himself and his family. This is an appalling insight since not only does it announce the fracture of patriarchal authority but it also rips off the altruistic veneer worn by this oppressive regime and exposes Stephen to his own selfishness. Joyce however does not leave it at that. If the future clearly doesn't belong to Dilly that is because she remains in thrall to the family structuration which the very economy of Joyce's texts has been mobilised to destroy. Likewise in *Ulysses* both Stephen and Bloom are tied to a progenitive discourse (they seek to anchor their identities as producers - father, author) that their world (the novel *Ulysses*) denies. Bloom and Stephen are quite literally historical figures. Just as the language of *Ulysses* achieves its fullest liberation in 'Penelope' so too can Molly Bloom, securely possessed of her own integral identity, pointing towards Anna Livia Plurabelle, be considered as the first free woman, the first person not to be encumbered by the family narrative. It is significant in this respect that the 'intemperance' referred to in this chapter as productive of paternal violence can now be understood to refer to a liberated, uninhibited, discursive explosivity.

VI

Conclusion

In this conclusion I will consider how the arguments presented in my thesis affect the key terms around which it has been structured: modernism and the family. I will argue that it is through the political reading of texts, what Fredric Jameson calls 'the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation' (17) that one can see modernism as opposed to the ideology of the family and I will re-emphasize how this opposition is self-consciously pursued by modernist writers. In so doing I will stress the significance of the engagement with a social structure over the purely gendered reading of modernism that is most fully presented in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *No Man's Land* where they suggest: 'a reaction-formation against the rise of literary women became not just a theme in modernist writing but a motive for modernism' (1: 156) but that can also be found in a host of more recent works, such as Lynn Pykett's *Engendering Fictions*. Of course Gilbert and Gubar have shown convincingly how bound up with gender politics was the emergence of modernism but I have argued in this thesis that the most important strategy of modernist novels (one might almost say the strategy that *makes* them modernist novels) for resisting the ideologies of the nineteenth century is resistance to the socially symbolic forms of those ideologies. I will continue to argue in this conclusion that modernism attacks the nineteenth century (morality, politics, society, and culture) through the structure of the family as implicated in the structure of the novel.

Lynn Pykett has addressed this question of the extent to which one should read the form of modernist texts as a key to their meaning that would enable them to be seen as 'anti-patriarchal, feminine, and radical' (12). She argues against such a reading for four reasons:

First, in its privileging of form and textuality, it would appear to represent a variant of the modernist and New Critical separation of the "verbal icon" from the complex social and cultural world in which it is produced. Second it implicitly reproduces the Eliotean separation

between the (wo)man that suffers and the mind which creates. Third, it requires us to believe that, irrespective of the avowed politics of the author, and irrespective of any overtly "conservative" statement...which a modernist text might make, its disruptive form is "subversive". Perhaps most problematic of all, it is rather difficult to accommodate the Kristevan view of the language of modernism as a feminine language of flow and flux with the tendency of some rather important male modernists (Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence, for example) to castigate the offensiveness or incoherence of women and of feminine language. (13)

I have quoted Pykett at length because her argument here runs directly counter to the argument that I have been presenting in this thesis and that I am seeking to defend in this conclusion. I would suggest that Pykett's critique of the view that sees the formal properties of modernist texts as carrying their significance comes down to two issues. Firstly, that in emphasizing the formal characteristics of modernist texts one risks overlooking their content and how that reflects their social and cultural context. Secondly, that the form of modernist texts can appear to run counter to the intention of the author.

In dealing with the first of these objections I would argue that I have attempted throughout this thesis to lend equal weight to the formal and contentual properties of texts. I have argued that modernist literature represents an assault on the family and that this assault is embedded in both the form and content of modernist works. However, I would take issue with Pykett's suggestion that attending to the form of a text involves isolating it from its social and cultural context. Indeed if that were the case then there would be no connection between the assault on narrative that I trace throughout this thesis and the assault on the family and consequently on the political order of the nineteenth century that I believe underpins much modernist work.

In *The Novel as Family Romance* Christine Van Boheemen argues that the function of narrative is to reflect a particular type of subjectivity (4). She argues that throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the novel provided mankind with a mirror in which it could see itself as transcendent subject: 'a superior and detached agent controlling and ordering its world and the medium that creates the world: language' (5). The narrative patterns that we impose on our experiences are derived from our culture, which in the nineteenth century can be described as patriarchal:

stories have plot because plot, as logos, informs our minds, our perceptions, our selves, and our society. In creating stories then - that is, in consciously exercising the faculty for ordering - we project the very essence of culture... (164)

Thus nineteenth century narratives tend to be structured in such a way as to reproduce the authority of the father thereby guaranteeing the authority of the author and providing the reader with a secure sense of identity. To reject, therefore, the narrative patterns that govern nineteenth century novels is to suggest a confrontation with the larger cultural patterns structuring the contemporary understanding of subjectivity. Therefore 'form' and 'textuality' do not represent areas of inquiry that are isolated from 'the complex social and cultural world' in which novels are produced.

Secondly I would take issue with Pykett's attempt to read the intention of modernist authors as contradicting their formal radicalism. I think Pykett problematises her own argument through her phrasing. In talking of the 'overtly "conservative" statement...which a modernist text might make' she already suggests that a text itself can make statements or hold meaning regardless of the intention of the author. Furthermore I think there is a problem with attempting to describe modernism simply as expressive of an anti-patriarchalism. If, rather than using that description, one understands modernism as a rejection of the family as it manifested itself in the nineteenth century as an ideology and a social structure then I think we can see a very clear path that links the radicalism of Lawrence to that of Woolf for instance or to Dorothy Richardson, Ford Madox Ford, Katherine Mansfield or any other of a number of modernist novelists all of whom were bound to express their hostility to the nineteenth century through an assault on its socially symbolic structures.

Pykett's argument illustrates one of the problems of talking about broad themes through generalisations. Of course all the key terms in this thesis, the family, modernism, and the nineteenth century (in the evaluative sense in which I use it) should perhaps exist in inverted commas. They masquerade as totally integrated objects whilst all the time their integral subjectivity is under threat of splitting into a multiplicity of competing personalities. Nothing is to be gained

however from attempting to neutralize the schizophrenia of these concepts from the outset, rather I have attempted through this thesis to add resonance, weight and complication to these ideas through examining their meaning for Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf, and Joyce. Returning then to Pykett, I think her difficulty with Lawrence (and T.S.Eliot and Ezra Pound) is a product of her understanding the nineteenth century family as patriarchal and of Lawrence as a supporter of patriarchy. How can one read works that accord with the nineteenth century orthodoxy as in any way revolutionary? The point is of course that Lawrence doesn't perceive the nineteenth century family as a bastion of patriarchy but rather as suffering from the erosion of such authority. Lawrence's radicalism is therefore directed against the nineteenth century family, just as, in a different way, Woolf and Joyce's radicalism is directed against the family.

There can be no comprehensive definition of modernism. Pykett quotes from Eugene Lunn's *Marxism and Modernism* what she describes as the key characteristics that would command broad assent. These are:

aesthetic self-consciousness or self-reflexiveness; simultaneity, juxtaposition or montage; paradox, ambiguity, and indeterminacy or uncertainty; "dehumanization", and the disappearance or dispersal of the integrated individual human subject. (10).

Fredric Jameson has described the modernist vision of society as 'the ideology of the relativity of...individual monads' (223). I would add to these 'definitions' something that comes out very strongly from my examination of modernism and the family, that is that modernist texts are oppositional, antagonistic, or hostile to the political ideologies of the nineteenth century. This oppositional impulse is embodied in modernist texts at the level of form. This is not of course to suggest that the trajectory of opposition is the same for all modernist writers. It is not. However, I would add that this opposition always expresses itself as and through opposition to the family: 'this antagonism to family as a fact and ordering of life is accompanied by a resistance to any kind of story or plot that seems formally to imitate family relations' (Caserio 233). Of course in suggesting that this is a characteristic of modernist writing I am arguing that it can be found not only in the writers examined in this thesis but also in the works of, for example, Henry James, Ford Madox Ford, Dorothy Richardson,

Edith Wharton, May Sinclair, or Katherine Mansfield. What this means is that modernism should not be thought of as disconnected from its historical, social and cultural contiguity with the nineteenth century. It is intimately connected with what preceded it. That is why, notwithstanding her announcement of a cataclysmic change to human nature in 1910, Woolf's work obsessively reconstructs her Victorian heritage. That is also why the work of critics such as Gilbert and Gubar but also of David Trotter, Jane Eldridge Miller, Lynn Pykett, and Peter Keating (to name but a few) who have reconstructed the contextual grounding of modernism is to be welcomed.

There is clearly a risk that in necessarily having to engage with a limited number of authors that the argument about the general concept under discussion will be skewed by making judgements on the evidence of a narrow empirical field. I do not believe that Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf and Joyce constitute a narrow and carefully selected constituency whose works all point in one direction and who therefore do not adequately represent the diversity of outlook, style, temperament, and politics of modernist writing. In fact, in his introduction to *Beyond Egotism*, Robert Kiely begins by defending his decision to discuss the works of Lawrence, Joyce, and Woolf. He notes the recurring view amongst literary critics that Lawrence and Joyce, for example, must be examined on the basis of totally independent criteria and should not be thought of as attempting the same things. Therefore there has been a tendency to see the writers I am discussing together in this thesis as beyond the scope of a common approach. Of course Kiely's own work shows how this exclusiveness can be challenged.

Furthermore I would argue that there are relatively few critics who have attempted to lend equal weight in their examinations of modernism to the form and content of the works they study. Where critics have focused on the matter of modernist works then their focus has tended to operate under the sign of feminism and has fed the 'regendering' of modernism. Having said this, Jane Eldridge Miller's *Rebel Women* is an attempt to link up the revolutionary form of modernist writing to its revolutionary content. Miller claims the attempt by Edwardian writers to embody a new reality in relation to changes in the lives of

women, resulted in a struggle with form that led to the innovations of modernism:

Edwardian novelists writing about feminists found that the principle forms of nineteenth century British fiction were, at the most basic level of narrative dynamics, inimical to the representation of feminist rebellion, for they inevitably moved toward or endorsed stasis, the status quo, and social integration through marriage, and thus ran contrary to the heroine's desire for independence, rebellion and social change. (4)

Thus Miller argues that New Women novelists such as Sarah Grand, attempting to work within the old narrative traditions, were forced to present characters who either conformed to society or lived as outcasts. The 'heroine's rebellious energies are made to conform to the more dominant needs of the novel, such as social integration and closure' (20).

There are two related reasons why I oppose the gendered reading of modernism. Firstly, if one of the motives for modernism can be understood as being a negative reaction to the cultural, social and economic emergence of women in the late nineteenth century then how can we accommodate within a single discourse both those who celebrate that emergence and those who, supposedly, wish to frustrate it? Secondly, if the reformulation of the novel by women writers is gendered, why do male modernist writers come up with similar structural reformulations? I have argued throughout this thesis, and wish to emphasize the point once more in my conclusion, that if one understands the development of modernism as bound up with the gender politics of the late nineteenth century then it is important that one should understand the key term in this debate as being the family. In other words, what is significant about the New Woman is not just the fact of her emergence but the implied destruction of the institution from which she emerged, the Victorian family. Clearly if one accepts the construction of the nineteenth century family as patriarchal then this assertion of female independence has far-reaching consequences for understanding the operation of authority within the state. Kate Millett has pointed towards the way in which the patriarchal family is tied into the political structures of the state:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. Mediating between the individual and the social

structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. (33)

The emergence of the New Woman is therefore of significance because it indicates the demise of the patriarchal system, the demise of the political power relations of the nineteenth century. Modernist authors such as Woolf and Lawrence can therefore be accommodated within the same critical discourse because both are opposed to the nineteenth century family. Woolf because its patriarchal structuring frustrated the talents and abilities of women by denying them any social, economic or cultural power. Lawrence because, to him, the nineteenth century family was a travesty of patriarchy that allowed women to annex all authority and left the father a desultory and impotent figure.

Thus I would argue that when Gilbert and Gubar turn towards an investigation of the role of the family in the generation of modernism (significantly in the final chapter of the final volume of their three volume work) their argument is undermined by the emphasis it places on gender. For them the family is a restrictive institution only for women, they do not share Woolf's insight in *Jacob's Room* (and elsewhere) that the family can be just as deterministic for its male members:

Where such male writers as...Conrad, Joyce, Pound...could easily opt for biological paternity without fearing that such a role would undermine their aesthetic authority, many successful modernist women could not take a biological risk that might incarcerate them in just the sex roles they were striving to critique or repudiate. (3: 391)

This is clearly a highly partial view that posits for male modernist authors an easy biological paternity. Not only does it ignore a writer such as Lawrence and smoothes over the fact that Joyce's children were born out of wedlock, but it also suggests that only female modernist authors were sensitive to the political implications of conventional sex roles. John Carey's *The Intellectuals and the Masses* reveals that Gilbert and Gubar are simply wrong on an empirical level to attribute the retreat from parenthood as a gendered position:

Literary intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century tended to opt for childlessness or child neglect. Wyndham Lewis, for example, refused to have children by his wife, and took no responsibility for the illegitimate children his mistresses gave birth to. His son and daughter were both given away...When Olga Rudge bore Ezra Pound a daughter in 1925, the baby was handed over to a peasant couple to be reared in a remote village in the Austrian Tyrol. (171)

If Gilbert and Gubar are wrong on an empirical level they are I think just as wrong on a theoretical one. Modernist novels whether by female or male writers are intensely involved with the question of reproduction, the reproduction of the family and of reality.

David Trotter's attempt to write a different history of modernism that stresses the context of economic and political rather than social and intellectual history, opens with a chapter that looks at the cultural implications of 'the demise of an ideology of production and its replacement by an ideology of consumption' (2). I would suggest that such an ideological shift has ramifications both for our understanding of the form of the family and of the form and function of the novel. In arguing that modernist literature inhabits a non-productive, anti-familial discourse one of the most compelling pieces of empirical evidence is the number of child deaths in the works of the authors studied in this thesis. If the family's chief biological and ideological function is to reproduce itself then the death of the child, its consumption by the text, threatens the very possibility of this structure. Furthermore, if the child represents the progression of narrative, its forward movement in the linear pattern of succession, then again, to highlight the death of the child is to emphasize the threat to this form of progression, this form of narrative construction.

It is therefore of some significance that many of the key moments or events in the works in this thesis should depend upon the death of a child. Perhaps most significantly in *Ulysses* it is the death of the son Rudy Bloom that generates the desire out of which the narrative is produced. In Conrad's work, Nostromo, Lord Jim, and Stevie are all to some extent killed by their adopted fathers. In Woolf's work the deaths of Andrew Ramsay and Prue Ramsay (in childbirth) seem to indicate the unavailability of a certain form of narrative as do the deaths likewise of Jacob Flanders, Sylvia in *Mrs Dalloway* and Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* whose death is Woolf's way of countermanding the impetus of the marriage plot. In *The Rainbow* the crisis of the novel is to a great extent constructed around Ursula's conscious willing of the destruction of the child that binds her to Skrebensky:

The child bound her to him. The child was like a band round her brain, tightened on her brain. It bound her to Skrebensky.

But why, why did it bind her to Skrebensky? Could she not have a child of herself? Was the child not her own affair? All her own affair? What had it to do with him? (544)

If there is ample empirical evidence to suggest that male modernist writers were equally exercised by the politics of production and reproduction as their female peers, there is also a theoretical angle to this argument that I would finally like to explore and that I believe illustrates why one can argue that modernism is premised on the rejection of the family through the reformulation of narrative. Edward Said in *Beginnings* argues that modernist novels break down any plot that seems to mime a family order that is understood as false. In examining Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* Said posits a number of textual conventions that Freud consciously avoids:

The fifth and final convention is that the unity, or integrity, of the text is maintained by a series of genealogical connections: author-text, beginning-middle-end, text-meaning, reader-interpretation, and so on. Underneath all these is the imagery of succession, of paternity, of hierarchy. (162)

Said encourages the reader to see Freud's practice as an analogue of the narrative practice of the fictive writers of the early twentieth century. In *Plot, Story, and the Novel* Robert Caserio builds on Said's examination of narrative to argue that whereas the family is the plot in many nineteenth century novels (Dickens's narratives for example are nearly always about the generation of kin) modernist novelists, hostile to the institution of the family, oppose those plot structures which seem to be imitative of family relations: 'There is indeed an analogy between family line and story line in the modern novel: and the modern novelist and his sense of plot subverts both lines' (234). What is jettisoned therefore is the hierarchical ordering of a mastering meaning or intention that operates through a series of genealogical connections. To modernist writers, plot comes to seem like a repressive central authority that is removed so that the parts of the text function regardless of logical succession (like the Freudian dream text) through adjacency and juxtaposition. The logic of culminating succession is replaced by an emphasis on unresolved openness.

There are many ways in which one can validate this assessment of the anti-familial form of modernist novels. At the level of content I have already shown that the modernist novel is heavy with the death of children. In terms of generic conventions the marriage resolution that gave form to the closure of many nineteenth century works is gestured towards in modernism (for example *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Nostromo*, *Under Western Eyes*, *Victory*; *The Voyage Out*; *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, *The Lost Girl*; 'Eveline' might all be said to move towards this resolution) only for such an ending to prove inaccessible. However, the thrust of both Said and Caserio's theories is towards narrative organisation itself and it is to that that I finally wish to turn.

I am coming back now to the source of my dispute with Pykett outlined in the early pages of this conclusion. In maintaining the dialogue between form and content throughout this thesis I have sought to show the way in which modernist writers embody their meaning in the structure of their works. Further, I have argued that it is through this incarnation of meaning in form that a work can be described as modernist because it is only through this process that social ideologies can be effectively challenged. I am therefore arguing, following Said and Caserio, that what is *vital* to the modernist text is its rejection of progenitive discourse. This aspect of modernism was recognised relatively early by Edmund Wilson in *Axel's Castle*, published in 1931, where he notes the fact that 'the first critics of *Ulysses*...did not recognise a plot because they could not recognise a progression' (211). It might be argued at this point that the very use of the terms 'reproduction' or 'progeniture' to describe narrative discourse requires an explanation that is gender specific. Indeed Kate Millett argues that in patriarchal culture reproduction is presented as the final possibility for woman to possess the penis, to obtain authority (186). To refuse to enter into the reproductive economy is thus to deliberately confront the gender-specific role prescribed by patriarchal culture. Of course therefore resistance to this narrative structure will be inflected differently for men and women. However, what I would argue is of more significance is the fact that all modernist writers share this resistance which gives their work a shared oppositional orientation towards their culture.

This resistance to the familial model of plot through rejection of the narrative of logical succession can be read in the works of all the writers in this thesis. It is the disjunction that separates the *Patna* and Patusan episodes of *Lord Jim* which Fredric Jameson argues indicates a shift between two narrative paradigms and marks the disparity between two types of narration or narrative organisation (206). It can be found in the tripartite structure of *To the Lighthouse* which emphasizes disruption to the smooth flow of linear succession and perhaps finally valorises the anti-familial artist figure Lilly Briscoe. The discourse shift that Jameson notes in *Lord Jim* can also be found in Lawrence's work. *The Lost Girl* for instance appears initially to be the ordinary story of a middle class girl living within the confines of the family system in 'a mining townlet' (11) in the industrial Midlands. However, a hundred pages into the text Lawrence suddenly intrudes to announce that the narrative will now take a different direction:

So far, the story of Alvina is commonplace enough. It is more or less the story of thousands of girls. They all find work. It is the ordinary solution of everything. And if we were dealing with an ordinary girl we should have to carry on mildly and dully down the long years of employment; or, at the best, marriage with some dull schoolteacher or office-clerk. (107)

Lawrence is describing the nineteenth century narrative which reproduces reality. However, at this point, in this novel which is intensely concerned with the politics of the family and the need to break away from it, he explicitly rejects that kind of narrative. The remainder of the novel abandoning any kind of realistic narrative logic will find Alvina changing her name to Allaye and living in a village in Italy with a former circus performer.

Finally I would argue that it is in the works of Joyce and particularly *Ulysses* that one can trace the fullest realisation of this anti-familial narrative structure. I have already illustrated, in the previous chapter, that there is certainly no critical consensus regarding the political implications of Joyce's work. Christine Van Boheemen argues, for example, that *Ulysses* upholds the plot of patriarchy (7). I have attempted in this conclusion to shift the terms of the argument away from a simple interrogation of the concept of patriarchy back to the material ground of that concept, the family. In so doing I have tried to show

that it is their resistance to family plot that structures the modernist rejection of nineteenth century forms and faiths. I think there is compelling evidence in *Ulysses* to suggest that Joyce consciously incarnates this anti-familialism in the non-progenitive structure of his narrative. Many critics, such as Frances Restuccia, have noted that by the time of 'Sirens' *Ulysses* has begun to repeat itself. Reprising the image of 'the ravenous terrier' in 'Lestrygonians' David Trotter describes this textual form as the text's beginning 'to spew what it has eaten, to lap its own vomit' (219). He suggests that 'Circe' is the fullest expression of this tendency in the novel because it is premised on the recapitulation of thought and events from the previous fourteen episodes (220). Trotter's delineation of a pathology of modernism interprets this process in *Ulysses* through a register of disgust and suggests that Joyce is deliberately frustrating the reader's expectations of relevance. However, I would argue that another reading of this incestuous cannibalistic structure is its displacement or indeed outraging of the family plot of narrative.

Etymologically to conclude means to shut. Joyce's work rejects conclusion for openness, rejects the narrative of logical familial succession for something less determined. Not only does Joyce present a new form of narrative organisation in *Ulysses* but in the 'Nausicaa' episode he also satirises the old. Caserio argues that Gerty MacDowell is the product of familial plotting and male form: 'Gerty is the victim of the male will to form life over again in its image, as the domestic dynasty that is the male-dominated family' (244-5). 'Nausicaa' then is an expression of this form which Joyce indicates is quite literally a masturbatory male structure and which builds up to or concludes at a fixed moment, marked with fireworks.

I have ended this thesis with a discussion of *Ulysses* because, following Caserio (238), I think it can be read as an historical novel charting the transformation of the family and thus of the familial structure of narration (the death of the genetic plot of father and son). Both Bloom and Stephen are out of time in their patriarchal desire to author. If, as some critics have argued, Molly's discourse is peppered with patriarchal constructions then that is only to be expected from her position in patriarchal culture. What is more significant is

the challenge offered to that culture by the construction of Molly's discourse. She doesn't pursue creation or generation to assuage the gap left by the absence of Rudy. She inhabits a discourse that can accommodate holes. If Joyce's work often seems to express the violence inherent in society, then in disrupting the claim to an authoritative possession of a monological truth through the destruction of the patriarchal plot by 'the Bringer of Plurabilities' (*Finnegans Wake* 104. 1-3) Joyce is suggesting an escape from the distorting structures of his culture. One of the most important of these structures for modernist writers was the family.

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